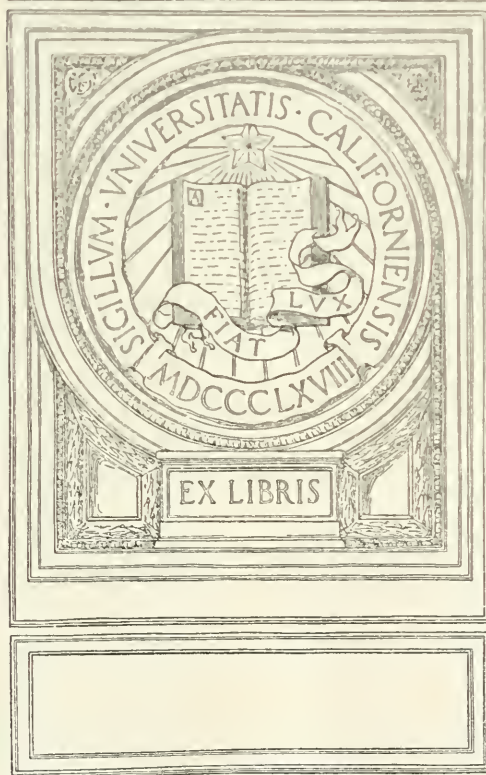




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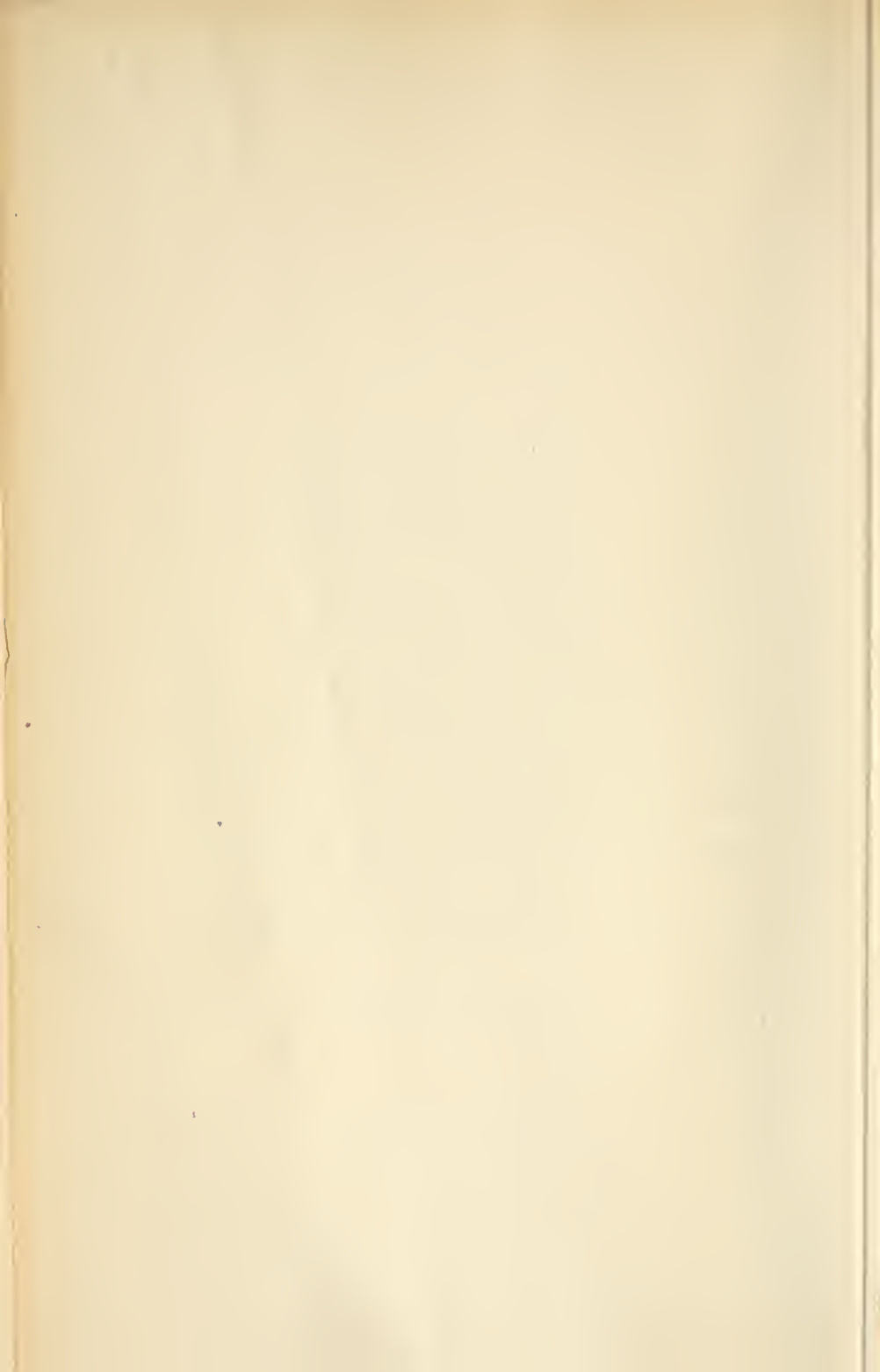
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# THE CRIME

VOLUME III

WAR-AIMS







# THE CRIME

(DAS VERBRECHEN)

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"J'ACCUSE"

TRANSLATED BY  
ALEXANDER GRAY

VOLUME III  
WAR-AIMS

*"Never in the history of the world has a greater crime than this been committed. Never has a crime after its commission been denied with greater effrontery and hypocrisy."—"J'ACCUSE."*

HODDER AND STOUGHTON  
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# THE CRIME

VOLUME III

WAR-AIMS







## PART III

# WAR - AIMS

### INTRODUCTION

I PROPOSE to treat the question of war-aims in a series of memoirs, composed at various times immediately after the crises on this subject. These essays closely follow the events in question, like a critical shadow, and in this way clearly indicate all the halting places on the pathway to the peace of the future.<sup>1</sup>

This method of treatment, which was in the first place imposed by the manner in which the articles came into being, has the advantage, in my opinion a very considerable one, that it reproduces the vivid impression which the events produced on the writer at the moment, and not a dry historical report written at a distance. Such a method enlivens the account and, as I believe, makes it more attractive to the reader by presenting him with a kind of diary of war-aims, which with light pencil chronicles the decisive events on the world theatre, and, if we may transfer Zola's famous definition from art to politics, reveals "*chaque coin des événements à travers un tempérament*."

On the other hand, the chronological method of treatment had certainly this drawback, that it could only consider the events existing at any one time, not those which may have followed at a later date. I have

<sup>1</sup> Of the essays contained in this section "Bethmann the Pacifist" alone has hitherto been published (in *Wissen und Leben*, Orell Füssli, December, 1916, January, 1917). The remaining essays have not previously appeared in their present form.



endeavoured to overcome this disadvantage by adding to the essays a number of amplifications, bearing on later events, and in this way I was able to sketch a complete view of the situation, as it existed about the spring of 1917, on the conclusion of this last section of my work.

I have not considered it necessary on each occasion to emphasise these additions as such, since the reader can at once distinguish the addition from the original text by reference to the events discussed.

\* \* \* \* \*

### THE QUESTION OF GUILT—FIRM GROUND WAR-AIMS—UNCERTAIN GROUND.

The discussion of war-aims is differentiated from the discussion of the question of guilt in the fundamental point that the question of guilt, that is to say the question : " Who bears the responsibility for the European War ? " was decided on August 4th, 1914, and indeed on August 1st, with Germany's declaration of war against Russia. All the considerations necessary to form an opinion on the responsibility for the European War, which was bound almost automatically to develop out of the German-Russian War, were already furnished on that day. All the later diplomatic publications had no other end in view, and had no other effect, than to illuminate those considerations of guilt which already existed in the first days of August, 1914.

In the investigation of the question of guilt we thus move on ground that is clearly marked off, and it is only the judgment passed on, and the value attached to, the various considerations of guilt, that vary according to the standpoint of the critic. Moreover, even in remote times it will be on the basis of the same material as is accessible to us to-day—perhaps with the addition of certain later revelations, of no importance so far as the main question is concerned—that inquiry will be made into the great historical question : " Who provoked the European War of 1914 ? "

The position is quite different with regard to the question of war-aims. Here we do not stand on firm ground, but



on very uncertain ground. The war-aims are most intimately connected, not merely with the causes of the war—on which I have fully expressed my views elsewhere—but also with the success achieved in the war, that is to say, they are related to the constantly varying military situation, which in the nature of things involves a constant rise and fall in the aims of the belligerent parties. Their wishes may no doubt remain the same, but the prospects of their realisation vary. Thus the parties may find themselves compelled to moderate their wishes temporarily, or at any rate to place them in the background so long as matters are going badly from a military point of view ; whereas on the other hand, when things go better, they are in a position to come forward once more with their earlier wishes and perhaps even to place them still higher. Not even the most rabid annexationist can fail to repress his expansionist aims, if he is convinced from the war situation that they cannot be attained, or at any rate cannot be attained in their full extent. He will, however, once more emerge with his annexationist desires as soon as the military situation appears to permit their accomplishment.

#### THE BASIC LINES OF THE WAR-AIMS ON BOTH SIDES.

As it is not, and cannot be, my task to enumerate here all these temporary oscillations, which have no relation to the purpose and the aim of my work, I am in this place compelled to restrict myself to indicating the basic lines of the war-aims of the two groups of Powers, without following the parties along all the side-paths which they may choose to open. The basic lines are plain and clearly perceptible ; the side-paths are often confused, often lead into copsewood and thicket, and obscure rather than illuminate the points of contrast.

By basic lines I understand those general and original tendencies which on the outbreak of war in August, 1914, governed those Powers immediately concerned. As we have seen in the second section of this book, and as we shall find confirmed in the third section which follows, these were on the German side tendencies of imperialistic



extension of power; on the side of the Entente it was primarily the tendency to defence against a criminal act of aggression, and secondarily that of protection against future disturbances of the peace.

The war-aim of the Entente Powers was thus in its original tendency nothing more than the repulse of the German attack from their own frontiers as well as from the frontiers of Serbia and Belgium, the liberation of the territories occupied by Germany, the creation between States, or rather above States, of a condition of law which would render the present disturber of the peace innocuous for the future and would once for all establish the standards of law in place of violence. The longer the war has lasted, the more has this latter war-aim of the Entente Powers emerged with distinctness and precision as the main object of the Allied Powers. In the following chapters we shall find collected the utterances of English and French statesmen who from the beginning of the war until to-day have proclaimed that the most important war-aim of the allied nations is the creation of a league of nations to secure the establishment and the enduring maintenance of the peace of the world.

The accession of America to the group of the Entente Powers has completely confirmed this war-aim as the cardinal point in the world-struggle, and has thus imparted to the sanguinary contest an unparalleled world-historical importance. A few weeks after its success the Russian Revolution on its side also inexorably swept away the aims of conquest proclaimed by the Tsar's Government, and set in their place a Socialist-Pacifist programme, which in every word is in agreement with President Wilson's noble ideas of peace.

#### TERRITORIAL QUESTIONS.

It is true that on the side of the Entente Powers there was also a period in the peace-discussions—before the adhesion of America and before the outbreak of the Russian Revolution—when certain territorial wishes on the part of individual Powers belonging to the Entente Alliance appeared to obscure and to press into the background the



great main object of this alliance, which was to repel and render innocuous the disturber of the peace, and to protect the world permanently from similar disturbances of the peace. That was an episode which could easily be explained and justified by the frivolous provocation of war on the part of the Central Powers and by the even more frivolous proclamation of the German aims of conquest, although, however, it threatened for a time to obliterate and to rob of its historical significance the great and permanent features of the titanic struggle of two cosmic views, that of the democratic-pacifist on the one hand, and that of the autocratic-militaristic on the other.

The position has now fortunately changed. This confusing interlude lasted only a few months. Under the leadership of the powerful transatlantic Republic, with the accession of the newly arisen Russian Republic, the alliance of the united democracies against the united autocracies has assumed a firmer form than before; the ideas of the freedom of the nations within, and of the peace of the nations without, in their struggle against political tutelage within, and against military guarantees of power without, have found a surer resting-place and a more powerful support. As a result of the most recent phase of the struggle the antitheses between the points of view on the two sides have been even more sharply manifested than at the beginning of the war. To-day even the blindest must recognise that on the standard of the one party Progress is inscribed, on that of the other Retrogression.

All the small territorial desires which this one or that of the allied Powers may at an earlier period have put forward, and may in part still advance to-day, disappear when viewed in conjunction with this great contrast. It can certainly be assumed—and all President Wilson's statements as well as those of the provisional Government of Russia confirm the assumption—that the United States, and equally so the Russian Republic, have not only at the present moment a seat and a voice in the council of the belligerents, but that they will have these above all in the council of the nations concluding peace, and that these greatest and freest Republics of the world will not give their assent to a continuation of the struggle purely for aims



of conquest. They will tolerate and accept in their common programme of peace, along with the unanimous demand for restitution, reparation and guarantees, only such aims of their allies as are restricted to territorial alterations demanded by the principle of nationality, and by the right of self-determination of the population of certain disputed territories.

All these individual territorial questions, which in part existed before the war but have been rendered acute only through the war and in consequence of the war, I leave aside in my discussion of war-aims, since they are in no way connected with the purpose of my discussion.

All these are consequences of the war, accessory war-aims which have been added to the original aims of the States directly involved. They represent the reaction against the aims of annexation and conquest openly proclaimed by the aggressor, and at the same time they are the consequence of the later participation of other States which have adhered to one party or the other exclusively in the interests of their power. Germany's aims of conquest have called into being aims of conquest in certain Powers on the other side. The accession of other Powers on one side or the other has engendered or revived tendencies to the extension of power of some against others, which would never have awakened from their sleep of centuries and which would certainly never have been used as combustible material to enkindle a world-conflagration apart from the provocation of war by Germany.

I refrain from discussion of all these individual territorial questions for this further reason, that such a discussion could only take place on the basis of imperialistic considerations, which I from my personal point of view entirely reject, no matter from what side they may be advanced. The ground for the future peace of Europe is in no way levelled as a result of the transposition of lands and peoples from the point of view of the guarantee and extension of power; it is on the contrary undermined in advance. Only an order resting on law can permanently and successfully guarantee the future condition of peace.



THE INVESTIGATION OF WAR-AIMS—A STONE IN THE  
BUILDING OF ACCUSATION.

My investigation regarding the war-aims of the chief Powers concerned forms only a part of my arraignment, it is only a stone in my building of accusation. As a crime without motives is not conceivable, or at any rate is not credible, so the investigation of the original war-aims serves only to answer the question: "Who is responsible for having provoked the European War?" I investigate the war-aims with which the chief Powers concerned entered the war because these aims furnish the motive of the war; that is to say, the necessary amplification of the proof of guilt. On the other hand, I leave aside those war-aims which were formed in one Power or another only after the outbreak of war and in consequence of the outbreak of war, because these war-aims which appeared at a later date have nothing to do with the origin of the war, that is to say with the question of the guilt of the war.

THE GERMAN WAR-AIMS.

It is from this point of view that I treat the German war-aims also. In their basic lines Germany's war-aims have never varied, even if they may have been phrased in harsher or milder language, expressed more distinctly or ambiguously according to the military situation for the time being. From the first moment they have been aims of conquest—aims of conquest under the mask of defence and the "security of the future of Germany."

According to Herr von Bethmann's expression, the German peace-demands rest on the war-map. But since this war-map is subject to constant oscillations, it necessarily follows that the German peace-demands must also have suffered certain oscillations which, however, have not gained expression in a material reduction of terms, but only in a temporary formal restraint. At one time it was loudly trumpeted throughout the world that all the peoples in the east and the west, in the south and the north who were thirsting for freedom were to be freed



from their bondage by the German sword. At another time it was thought sufficient to sound the more dulcet notes of the "security of Germany" against new attacks, and to speak of "Germany's future and her freedom of development," of an "honourable peace," which it is true must give us "compensation for all sacrifices." In substance the original programme of conquest was maintained from the first moment to the last, and is in fact still maintained; the only difference being that the phantom was variously clothed, according to the time and the circumstances, at one time with the streaming toga of the liberator of the world, at another time with the modest uniform of the defender of the Fatherland. On the principle: "*C'est le ton qui fait la chanson*," the tune was occasionally changed, but in essence it was always the same music that was produced.

When the German sky was still rosy, when a German "victory" still found belief, the Chancellor on December 9th, 1915, and April 5th, 1916, delivered his two celebrated annexationist speeches, which were scarcely distinguishable from the extravagances of the extremest Pan-Germanism in their annexationist outbursts in every direction under the sun, and which were, therefore, greeted with uproarious applause by all the nationalist and annexationist parties in the Reichstag. These speeches I discuss in the next following chapter—"Bethmann the Annexationist."

When at a later date the attack on Verdun had definitively failed, when the enemy in the West began to move forward, it was not merely the German troops but also the German war-aims that executed a corresponding withdrawal. When the conquest of Rumania had again temporarily strengthened the German prospects of success, the German intentions of annexation and conquest, which had for a time been subdued, sprang aloft once more. The successes of the embittered submarine warfare let loose a new orgy of annexationism. Like earthworms after a storm, there again emerged from every conceivable nook and corner the most extreme super-annexationists—figures which we had long believed we had forgotten—demands which we had long imagined had perished of their own extravagance.



The notorious six economic associations appeared on the surface in an improved and enlarged edition and presented their old account : Better protection of the frontier ; land for colonisation ; naval power ; increase of power and acquisition of territory on land ; a German victory and a German peace.

Naturally the high Protector of all these super-annexationist efforts, the German Crown Prince, could not be absent from this new " national " witches' sabbath. This baneful expectant of a Throne, who had been before the war the most effective battering-ram of all the war-intriguers against the still vacillating bearer of the Crown and against his Government, has become during the war the most influential wire-puller and lobbyist in the courtly puppet-play, which has for its object the attainment of a German peace of power and violence. We are now accustomed to the fact that whenever the points of difference between brutality and moderation become acute in the environment of " the All-Highest War-Lord," the princely son comes to the help of the firebrands against the Government of his imperial father with telegrams or other demonstrations, and that he gains every time the success he desires. Such crown-princely telegrams—according to their contents and the persons to whom they are addressed—are always the weathercocks which indicate the direction of the wind in the high places of the German people. From this point of view serious consideration is claimed by the following telegram which, in the beginning of May, 1917, the Imperial Prince addressed to Professor Dietrich Schäfer, the President of the extremest of all German annexationist leagues, the " Independent Committee for a German Peace " :

" I have been specially pleased by the friendly wishes of the ' Independent Committee for a German Peace ' and convey my thanks to all who have thought of me.

WILHELM, CROWN PRINCE."

This telegram from the Crown Prince to Dietrich Schäfer possesses almost the same significance in relation to war-aims as the Prince's telegram to Frobenius, the author of



the pamphlet *The German Empire's Hour of Destiny*, had at the time in connection with the provocation of war (see *J'accuse*, page 34). Then the heir to the German Throne ostentatiously placed himself on the side of the inciters to war; to-day with equal ostentation he places himself on the side of the prolongers of the war. How long will the German people continue to tolerate such an incorrigibly infatuated intriguer and inciter as heir to the German Imperial Throne?

\* \* \* \* \*

As temporary success in the war furnishes the pitch for the manner and intensity with which the intentions of conquest are intimated on the side of Germany, so conversely it is possible to regard moderation and restraint in putting forward these intentions as a sure barometer indicating a depression in the internal and external situation of Germany. Like the needle of a magnet, the German war-aims themselves always remain pointing in the same direction. But their extent and the manner in which they are to be enforced oscillate to and fro like the indicator on a balance, according to the varying fortune of the iron game of dice. There was a moment when the scale containing the trophies of victory had rapidly risen so high that Herr von Bethmann suddenly acknowledged pacifist ideas, which he had throughout his life declared to be Utopian, and which he had unremittingly opposed. A month later the prospects of a victory of the Central Powers had sunk still lower and the dangers involved in a continuation of the war had so increased that the Governments of Germany and Austria had resolved on the portentous offer of their willingness to enter into direct peace negotiations with their opponents. The *theoretical* pacifism of November, 1916, had become a *practical* peace offer in December, but neither of these stages in the development had led to any express renunciation, or even to a material diminution, of the aims of conquest towards the East and the West which had been proclaimed up till then. No such renunciation, whether in greater or less degree, has ever at any time been expressed until the present day (April, 1917). On the contrary, the German Govern-



ment has even quite recently answered the Social Democratic demand for a "peace without annexations and without war-indemnities, on the basis of a free national development of all peoples," with a tortuous statement which culminates in the sibylline sentence :

The Government has communicated what it is in a position to say on the subject of war-aims, and is unable at present to make any further statement. Unaffected by pressure from either side, it will continue to pursue the path which is pointed out by its conscience and its responsibility to the country (see the resolution of the party-committee of the Social Democratic Party of Germany of April 19th, and the statement of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on the subject on April 24th, 1917).<sup>1</sup>

Thus even now, in the spring of 1917, the German Government maintains intact the annexationist programme which the Chancellor intimated in his earlier speeches and which he has already realised by decisive actions, towards the West and the East alike.

Thus the situation is clarified in a way for which we can only be thankful. My criticisms, which were written immediately after the earlier annexationist speeches of the Chancellor, appeared for a time rather to be of value merely as a historical retrospect, but they have now once more acquired *actual* significance, as a judgment of *actual* facts. Beneath all his pacifist disguises the Chancellor has until the present day remained what he was from the beginning : Bethmann the Annexationist. Until the present he has neither withdrawn nor modified nor weakened the war-aims he proclaimed at an earlier date. It is only the powerful blows of destiny, it is only the *dira necessitas* that will compel the faithful servant of his Imperial Master—and above all this Master himself—to renounce once for all their ambitious plans, to lay away in their knapsack the European marshal's baton, and as simple soldiers, in line with the leaders of other States, to enter the "Salvation Army" of the organised peace of the nations.

<sup>1</sup> I deal later with the Chancellor's speech of May 15th, 1917, which, in exactly the same way as the above notice from the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, maintains unaltered all the "basic lines" of German war-aims as previously expressed.



BETHMANN THE ANNEXATIONIST.

BETHMANN THE "PACIFIST."

BETHMANN THE OFFERER OF PEACE.

It is impossible in this place to follow in detail all the varying shades, all the more or less intentional ambiguities in the German demands as to war-aims. Bethmann the Annexationist became first of all Bethmann the "Pacifist"—for the time being, it is true, a platonic pacifist merely, a "pacifist" in inverted commas, who was still unable to conceal the Prussian Pickelhaube beneath the European olive branch, whose head, while proclaiming peace, was still anointed with whole gallons of annexationist oil.

Bethmann the "Pacifist" then further became Bethmann the Offerer of Peace—for the time, it is true, only a specious offerer of peace who played with concealed cards, cleverly keeping in his hands the trumps of conquest.<sup>1</sup> But who knows, perhaps the moment may no longer be far distant, when the pseudo-pacifist will be transformed into a real pacifist, when the specious offerer of peace will become a real offerer of peace, who will carefully leave the war-map at home and in its place will openly lay his peace-cards on the table. Perhaps matters may even proceed so far that the offerer of peace will in the end become a pleader for peace,—whereupon the line of development will have

<sup>1</sup> The section on war-aims originally ended with the treatment of Bethmann's speech of November 9th, 1916, in the Essay on "Bethmann the Pacifist." As, however, the printing of the manuscript given to the Press in December, 1916, occupied a number of months, it appeared to me expedient, in a concluding essay on "Bethmann the Offerer of Peace," to subject to a short treatment on lines of principle the important events which were ushered in by the German offer of peace of December 12th, 1916. An exhaustive treatment of this far-reaching subject, which has become even more important as a result of the entrance of America in the war, was no longer possible within the scope of my work. The peace discussions form a subject apart, which will not be ripe for fruitful treatment and for comprehensive discussion until this constantly fluctuating subject-matter has taken definite shape, that is to say after the initiation of real peace negotiations. My concluding dissertation will merely furnish certain fundamental lines to be observed in passing judgment on the peace-demands of the two groups of Powers, not a detailed criticism of these peace-demands.



reached its conclusion. I look to a day no longer remote,—and certainly I long for its arrival—when the Chancellor-General will hang up in the wardrobe, along with the Pickelhaube, the field-grey uniform in which, following Bismarck's example, he loves to show himself to the German people and to the world, and will sit down at the Council table, not in penitential sackcloth but in peaceful mufti, to deliberate on peace along with other civilian statesmen. Serious prospects of peace will not exist until the day when the Emperor and the Chancellor, instead of doing violence to others, will be glad if violence is not done to them, the originators of this enormous crime. The necessary basis for successful peace-negotiations will not be furnished until the day when the Emperor and the Chancellor will have realised that it would be for them a stroke of undeserved good fortune, if they could bring home from the Conference Hall to their ruined and mangled people, not profitable conquests but the bare *status quo ante*.

#### INTENTION AND SUCCESS OF THE CRIME.

The political and moral judgment to be passed on the German war-aims does not, of course, depend on their success. The criminal intention to base the condition of Europe once more on violence, on ships, cannons and bayonets, on the formation of groups and alliances, instead of on an organisation of the whole and on justice, remains the same whether it does or does not attain its ends. I have already elsewhere emphasised the fact that the mere announcement of the German war-aims, in the form in which they were proclaimed when the military situation was favourable, represents a new and weighty item of guilt in the debit account of the German rulers and governors, which apart from this is already sufficiently burdened. This guilt against the future is at least as heavy as the guilt in the past and the present.

The fact that this third crime, the crime against the future, cannot be committed, owing to *force majeure*, owing to the increasing strength and the increasing successes of their opponents—in the last place owing to the adhesion of America, the strongest Ally, to the group



of Germany's enemies—this fact, which is quite independent of the will of the German rulers, in no way alters their criminal intention, and consequently the decree of guilt which the court of the world must pass upon them.

We who seek to inquire into and determine the responsibility for this war are in no way concerned with the question: "What has Germany attained?" but solely with the question: "What did Germany want?" The former question can only be answered after the war is ended, after peace is concluded. It is a confirmation, on the facts, of military success or failure, the registration of a brutal matter of fact, and it is no more than this. The latter inquiry, on the other hand, the answer to the question: "What did Germany want?" is already possible at the present moment. It is independent of the events of the war. It does not rest on the uncertain ground of military events, but on the firm ground of official statements of rulers, Government and party-leaders.

The determination of the question: "What did Germany want?" is the essential basis of our ethical judgment on the responsibility, and on those who are responsible, for this greatest crime in the history of mankind. I said above that there is no crime without a motive. The motive of the crime of the war is the aim of the war. When the aim of the war is determined, the crime of the war will not indeed be proved—the proof of the deed must be drawn from the facts, and not from psychological motives—but it will thereby be explained from within, and be rendered humanly credible. When therefore the proof of the deed has been furnished and at the same time the motives of the deed have been exposed, the chain of evidence will be indissolubly completed, the guilty will be irretrievably caught in the snare of the evidence of his guilt.

\* \* \* \* \*

I believe that in my first and in this my second book I have proved the deed itself beyond dispute. The motives of the deed I lay bare in this concluding section on war-aims. That the deed was completed but was unsuccessful, that the ends were sought but not attained, is to be attri-



buted to a kind dispensation of Providence, and not to any merit on the part of the perpetrators. The moral judgment of their contemporaries and of posterity is in no way influenced by the failure of the misdeed. We have seen in the second section by reference to the aims which chauvinistic Germany proclaimed before the outbreak of war, what their success would have bestowed on us, and we shall find confirmation of this in this last section, by reference to the war-aims proclaimed during the war by the leading German statesman. The second and third section of this work, taken together, will teach us what war-aims were kept in view by the authoritative circles in Germany before and during the war—so long as the war-map appeared to favour their plans—what they sought to attain with a view to “Germany’s security against future attacks,” what guarantees for Germany’s power they intended to create in the East and the West, what contempt they felt for all ideas of an organisation of the European community of nations, resting on law.

Despite the already assured failure of Germany’s intentions, this retrospective survey of these intentions will remain an important stone in the crushing edifice of guilt raised against the rulers and the governors of Germany. It will reveal to the eyes of the peoples of the world—and above all to the German people itself, when it shall one day have awakened from its leaden sleep—the bitter, but salutary, truth :

All the unspeakable and immeasurable sacrifices which the German people have made, have been made for the worst cause for which a nation has ever seized arms. It was not a German national war—no, it was a Hohenzollern war of conquest that was criminally provoked in the summer of 1914. The victory of the Hohenzollerns would have meant the defeat of the German people, it would have been the prelude to the downfall of the old European civilisation. The failure of the Hohenzollerns will become the salvation of the German people, the delivery of Europe, the opening of a new and happier era in the history of mankind.



# CHAPTER I

## BETHMANN THE ANNEXATIONIST

### A

#### COMMENTS ON THE CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH OF DECEMBER 9TH, 1915,<sup>1</sup>

The proceedings of the Reichstag on December 9th, 1915—the prelude to a new approval of 500 million pounds, bringing the total sum approved for the war by Germany until then up to 2,000 millions <sup>2</sup>—again offered the edifying spectacle of a representative assembly which is united and prepared to intervene with life and wealth on behalf of their basely attacked Fatherland, and to secure for it all possible military, economic and political securities against similar attacks for the future.

“For the German Government this struggle is what it was from the beginning, and what the Government in all its announcements has asserted it to be: a war of defence of the German people. This war must only be ended with a peace which, as far as can be humanly foreseen, will offer us security against its recurrence. In this we are all at one; that is our

<sup>1</sup> This essay, hitherto unpublished, was written in the middle of December, 1915, and amplified by insertions relating to later events.

<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, in each of the sessions May-June and September-October, 1916, a further 600 millions, and in each of the sessions February and July, 1917, a further 750 millions, making in all 4,700 million pounds, have been approved.



strength, and so shall it remain." (Stormy and long sustained applause in the House and on the Tribunes.)

On this note of enthusiasm ended the speech of the Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg on December 9th, 1915.

The guarantees against future attacks, of which the Chancellor spoke at the conclusion of his speech had previously been described by him with sufficient clearness :

"Neither in the East nor in the West must our enemies of to-day have at their disposal doors of invasion by which they may to-morrow renew their threats against us more sharply than before." (Renewed applause and hand-clapping.)

"I cannot say what guarantees the Imperial Government will demand, for example, in the Belgian question, what bases of power they will consider necessary for these guarantees. But there is one thing which our enemies should bear in mind : the longer and the more bitterly they wage this war against us, the greater will be the guarantees which we must demand." (Stormy approval in the House and hand-clappings on the Tribunes.)

"It is well known that France advanced loans to Russia only on the express condition that Russia should construct her Polish fortifications and railways against us, and it is equally well known that England and France regarded Belgium as a territory on which to deploy against us. Against this we must make ourselves secure from a political and military as well as from an economic standpoint. What is necessary for this purpose must be attained." (Stormy and renewed applause and clapping of hands in the House and on the Tribunes.)

In plain language, the Imperial Government intends to proceed with powerful annexations in the East and the West and to link Belgium, Poland, as well as a part of the Russian Baltic provinces in one form or another to the German Empire. All this, of course, it is understood is



“only for the purpose of obtaining guarantees against future attacks.” Any idea of conquest was and is utterly remote from peace-loving Germany. “It is not desire for conquest that urges us on; we are animated by the unbending will to keep for ourselves and for all coming generations the place on which God has set us”—such were the words of the Imperial speech from the Throne on August 4th, 1914. To-day it is something else that is said: to-day it is no longer a question of keeping the place which God has assigned to us, but of extending it as far as possible, of setting ourselves, by means of violent jostling to the right and the left, in the place of others who might also maintain, and could at least do so with as much right as we, that divine Providence had been their servant in choosing them their place.

It will be seen that the question of the cause and the origin of the war is not merely a question of the past, which—as many falsely consider—has no longer a practical, but merely historical significance. It is, on the contrary, an eminently practical and vital question, since its determination in one sense or another continues to operate in the future also, and furnishes the measure by which to ascertain whether the war-aims are or are not justified. The party attacked has the natural and entirely justified object of protecting himself against future attacks. The aggressor has no need of such protection and can lay no claim to it. The enemies who have plunged him into misfortune sit within his own country, and against these he must himself find his own protection.

We pacifists and socialists regard as useless and ineffective any protection against attacks from without, so long as it rests on power and not on law. The worshippers of power, however, who unfortunately still constitute in Germany the great majority in the dominant and leading circles, still refuse to have anything to do with guarantees of peace by the protection of the law and by the peaceful organisation of the nations. They will refuse to know anything of this until their people, and other peoples, beat this knowledge into them by unmistakable methods, and verify in their case the proverb “He who refuses to hear must be made to feel.”



THE PRUSSIAN MILITARY SPIRIT—THE TRUE DISTURBER  
OF THE PEACE OF EUROPE.

It is a self-evident fact that the war-aims proclaimed by the Chancellor must indefinitely prolong the bitter struggle of the nations. The enemies of Germany will take care not to deliver into the hands of the brutal aggressor, as a reward for his misdeeds, greater weapons of force than he possessed before, and to accord him a hegemony in Europe which could only lead to new and bitter conflicts. They will be careful not to leave him territories which—in part on his own admission—he involved in war without reason and without law. The opponents of Germany are striving for an organisation of the European community of States resting on law, which can be attained only by the peaceful restraint of the bellicose disturber of the peace, according to the principle “Equal rights for all.” As I shall prove later in detail, no responsible statesman in England, France or Russia has ever, either before or during the war, expressed the intention of throttling or annihilating Germany. It is only Prussian militarism that it is proposed to make innocuous, because it is rightly held to be the true and the sole responsible originator of the world-war.

WHAT IS MILITARISM ?

Militarism is not the same thing as military preparations. These have been pursued by all States alike, although no doubt they were always urged on and compelled by the advance of the insatiable military Moloch which carried on its work in Prussian Germany. Militarism means a warlike spirit ; it is a warlike love of aggression ; it is the luxuriant growth of militaristic views over the civil point of view ; it is the preference accorded to the soldier-castes before all the other classes of the population ; it is the enthusiasm for war “for the sake of war,” as the alleged “father of all things,” as the maintainer and promoter of the strength of the people, as the source of all blessing. Militarism is a conglomerate of national-psychological and political factors, such as in the twentieth century exists



only in Prussia, and by infection from Prussia in Germany, but is to be found in no other country in the world.

To retaliate on other countries with the charge of militarism because they also had made military preparations, or in the case of the English, to accuse them of "marinism," is an absurdity which holds good least of all in the eyes of German critics. We know best what Prussian militarism is; for daily and hourly we see it and hear it and suffer under it. We know that this peculiar fragrance, compounded of the smell of the stables of Junkerdom and of the gunpowder of the soldiers, this dissonant coincident clangour of clattering spurs, of the rattle of trailing sabres and of the snarling voice of command is an authorised peculiarity of the "nationals" in Prussia. We know that the oldest dress-coat bows humbly to the ground, whenever the uniform of the youngest lieutenant appears on the horizon. We have seen Chancellors who on solemn occasions, before his Majesty graciously promoted them to be generals, proudly displayed their epaulettes as majors and colonels—Presidents of the Reichstag who, on the opening of Parliament, appeared in the uniform of a captain of the Landwehr; indeed, we have even seen a Finance Minister of happy memory, whom the Emperor caused to be promoted to be a second-lieutenant in order to make good the absence of any military rank. Even to-day the Chancellor Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, following a celebrated example, does not appear before the assembled Reichstag in a coat, but in general's uniform, and when the camera is taking the countless photographs of his "august" person which adorn all the illustrated papers, he does not forget to draw the field-grey cover over his helmet as if he had come directly from the trenches.

Imagine this, and much more to the same effect, in any other country. Imagine Grey, Asquith, or Lloyd George, the Minister for Munitions (the present Premier), in uniform before the House of Commons, or Sazonof as a Russian general in the Duma. Compare with this the position found in France, where even the Ministers for War are often civilians and review the troops at the front in a civilian's jacket, accompanied by the President, also in



mufti. Imagine a Prussian War Minister in civilian clothes, when in our case even a civilian Minister appears in a military rig-out.<sup>1</sup> It is impossible, inconceivable! I believe it would be the beginning of the revolution—from above!

It will be urged against me that these are details. No! These are symptoms of the spirit which prevails in Prussia and Germany. These are clothes which make people—coverings of the head, behind which thoughts are concealed. That is militarism, the abasement of the civil element before the military—militarism, which is not content with superficialities, but has poisoned the whole inner life of the Prussian people, and, unfortunately, after 1870 has saturated the life of the German people also, and infected it with the dangerous germs of disease. It was militarism that drove us to an increasingly violent development of our machinery of war by land and sea, and finally urged us to this war—militarism, which by prolonged boring operations inoculated the peace-loving people with the bacillus of war. It was militarism which, as Rohrbach openly acknowledges, “prepared public opinion for war.”

Above all, it was militarism, the crowding out by military considerations of the considerations of the statesmen, which provoked the fearful and portentous resolution for war in the last July days of 1914. The generals could not wait; every day's delay would have worsened the military situation of Germany. As against

<sup>1</sup> The most recent incident in this connection and an extremely characteristic one, is found in the fact that a few days after the appointment of the new Chancellor, Michaelis, the Emperor attached him to the Army, although for a long time he had had no military connections, and gave him authority to wear the uniform of the Grenadier Regiment No. 8, “giving him the character of a lieutenant-colonel.” It was indeed an intolerable situation that the new Chancellor should have been compelled to deliver in civil attire his great speech on taking up office on July 19th. “The man can be helped,” said the Emperor William. And behold, the man is helped! As in the past, the German people will now again experience the pleasure of seeing at its head a highest official who must humbly salute before officers of higher rank (before colonels, major-generals, lieutenant-generals and field-marschals). It is a pity that there is no way of giving to those who guide the destiny of Germany anything else than a military character.



this decisive point of view, of what importance were considerations of reason and humanity, which by a delay of a few days (as the English Ambassador Bunsen rightly points out) would have preserved the European nations from the most fearful of all catastrophes? It was the generals, led by the Crown Prince, and not the statesmen, who in the decisive hour had the controlling word and possessed the ear of the monarch. Indeed, these same generals and admirals who then provoked the precipitate resolution for war, still continue through their organs in the Press to reproach the Chancellor because he did not strike soon enough, because he did not strike a few days earlier. And in making this charge, although they are unconscious of the fact, they admit that it was not the Russian mobilisation of July 31st, but the Prussian will for war, which was already firmly fixed some days earlier, that gave the decisive impulse to the war. That is Prussian militarism. In no other country in the world would anything similar have been possible.

It is this militarism to which the present-day enemies of Germany mean finally to put an end. This is what they mean to defeat in such a manner as to render it once for all innocuous. It is not the German people that is their enemy. The President of the United States has quite recently emphasised this in unmistakable words in his message of April 2nd, 1917. It is not the German people that is to be suppressed, but the Prussian military spirit, this retrograde, pernicious spirit which in the past has stood in the way of any peaceful upbuilding of Europe, and which in future also, so long as it lives and breathes, will be a hindrance and a danger to an enduring peace among the nations.

That this spirit, which before the war was propagated by a small but very powerful minority only, has now in the midst of war seized and infected the greater part of the German people is a fact that we see confirmed daily and hourly in all the phenomena of public life in Germany, in all the utterances of the leading minds in literature, in the Press and in Parliament, reaching far into the Socialist ranks. Only the small flock of the Social Democratic minority (the present-day "Independent Social Democratic



Party ") has remained free from the nationalistic-militaristic infection. It is only here—crushed and oppressed by the censorship and by military violence—that there is still to be found the consistent opposition to Prussian militarism, which refuses it the means for the execution of its criminal plans. All the hopes of a revolution in the German people, and consequently of a peaceful future for Europe, rest on the activity and the success of this small handful of upright men.

It is only the awakening of Germany from the poisonous stupor into which Prussian militarism has plunged it that can bring the blessing. A sharp line of division must be made between Prussianism and Germanism, between Hohenzollernism and the people. It is here that all levers must be applied. It is from this point that the revolutionary spirit, which is to drive the military spirit out of the temple must be engendered, encouraged and developed.

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There is also another possible hope—the hope that the Prussian war spirit will be brought to shame by its own failure. No mortal can to-day say whether this hope will be realised: that rests on the knees of the gods. The military spirit of Prussia has brought forth an overwhelming military force which hitherto was able to resist a world, despite all the streams, all the oceans of blood which have already been shed to restrain this giant. Yet whatever may be the issue of the struggle, the hardest task is still reserved for the German people—the task of rooting out the spirit which has produced this dangerous monster.

The pacifist spirit must assume the place of the militaristic spirit. War must be recognised as what it is, as the most frightful scourge of the human race, as the destroyer of all that is good and noble and beautiful, as a force that roughens men's morals and minds, as the brutal devastator of the happiness and the well-being of men. They must be placed in the pillory of public detestation, these Rulers and Governments, these "national" glorifiers of wholesale carnage which "educates" the people—these men, who for the most miserable selfish interests, from ambition, from lust



of gain, from greed of glory and booty, incite millions of hapless men against each other to their mutual slaughter. It is necessary to disband as dangerous to the State and mankind, as guilty of high treason and of treachery towards their country, those organisations which have chosen as their profession the incitement of the nations and the intrigue to war, which puff out every petty incident until it becomes a matter of primary political importance that so they may heap together as much material as possible for the engenderment of conflicts between the nations. The word "war," that fearful horror-bringing word which these criminal cowards constantly have on their lips, while they themselves sit in security in their cosy studies—the word "war" must, I say, be interdicted in an Eleventh Commandment to read thus: "Thou shalt not abuse the name of war." He must be placed in the pillory as a blasphemer who dares to unite the fearful word with the name of the all-creator and the all-preserver, who dares to name himself "by the Grace of God," and at the same time to commit every day and every hour deeds of shame "by the grace of the devil."

No war is "holy"—unless it be a real true war of defence. Most unholy, however, is this bugbear of a war of defence, as it has now been deceitfully presented for years to the credulous German people.

Holy is peace—true, real peace, which firmly and surely rests on the cohesion of the nations ordered on a basis of law. Such a peace is not a remote Utopian aim, but the immediate objective prescribed by the experiences of this world-war. Cohesion of the nations on a basis of law! He who misjudges or despises this aim, he who has misjudged or frustrated it in the past, is the true disturber of the peace among the nations; as he has brought about the present catastrophe, so he will also be responsible for all further catastrophes. And this point should be borne in mind by those who are responsible as well as those who are irresponsible in Germany, by all those who before the war rejected those ideas of international organisation with derisive laughter, and who even now, after the fearful collapse of the old system, are unable to pull themselves together even to the extent of devoting serious consideration



to the underlying ideas of the Hague Conference, or even to take these into account as a factor in their calculations as to the future.

A victory of Germany—of this there can be no doubt—would have immeasurably strengthened these circles and tendencies which have already, apart from this, exercised in Prussian Germany the authoritative influence on the decisions of the Government—those circles to whom the extension of the power of their own country means everything, while the guarantee of peace by international organisation means nothing. Quite recently von Stein, the Prussian Minister for War, gave eloquent expression to the sceptical aversion of these circles from any development of international law in the direction of organised peace. On the second reading of the Army Budget in the Reichstag on May 4th, 1917, the Minister for War stated :

I do not entertain the hope that peace will be followed by the peace of the nations. So long as the interests of States are opposed to each other, there will be war. The prospects of a perpetual peace are at the present moment not exactly brilliant, when two great nations who have hitherto never thought of maintaining armies are in the course of creating them. It is our duty to make ourselves secure even after the war, in order to keep for our descendants what we have gained (Wolff's telegram of May 4th).

These few words speak volumes. The existence of opposing interests between States means for the War Minister a perpetuation of war. This gentleman devotes no thought to the possibility of a friendly settlement of conflicting interests. Even now he advances the old catchword about "perpetual peace" as an argument against pacifist ideas—that catchword which we pacifists for half a century have demonstrated to be an ignorant and unscrupulous misconstruction and falsification of our aims. As if the establishment of an order of law between States connoted a state of law perpetually undisturbed ; as if the creation of hygienic dispositions connoted perpetual health ; as if good schools and educational institutions connoted perpetual virtue and spotlessness ! With this thread-bare argument as to perpetuity it is possible to ridicule any human institution and represent it as ineffective. These gentlemen are indeed unteachable. These



are the observations of a Prussian Minister for War after nearly three years' duration of war. This is the attitude towards the decisive war-aim of the Entente Powers and above all to that of the most recent and powerful opponent of Germany, the United States, which the military spokesman of the Imperial Government assumes without evoking contradiction in the German Parliament (the Parliamentary report after the above words indicates "expressions of assent" and at the conclusion of the speech, "lively general applause").

With such views in authoritative places it is not only the present war, but also the future latent state of war which will be indefinitely perpetuated. These gentlemen do not believe in a perpetual peace, but they find no difficulty in believing in a perpetual war. So long as such men and such views are not rendered innocuous once and for all, it is impossible to expect any improvement in Germany or any lasting peace in the world. What, however, does Herr von Bethmann say to this speech of his War Minister—Herr von Bethmann who, on November 9th, 1916, made the astonishing confession that after this war "through the whole of humanity a cry would rise for pacific agreements and understandings . . . so strong and so justified, that it could not but lead to a result"? The speech of the War Minister of May 4th, 1917, furnishes the standard indicating the value to be attached to the pacifist confession of the Chancellor (to which later I devote a special chapter).

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An interesting pendant to the above utterances of the Prussian War Minister von Stein, is the speech with which the French General Dumas welcomed the American General Pershing on the arrival of the latter at Boulogne in the middle of June, 1917 :—

A new era is opening in the history of the world. The United States of America are combining with the United States of Europe. Together they are going to form the United States of the World, all at one in the effort definitively to slay war, to give us a fruitful, harmonious and durable peace by the society of nations. Welcome in our midst, General, for the blessing of humanity.



The contrast between the retrograde, narrow, militaristic Prussian spirit and the progressive, democratic, pacifist spirit of the French Republic, this deep irreconcilable contrast between two cosmic views, of which the one clings blindly to the past, while the other with clear vision looks into the future, cannot be better illustrated than by these two generals' speeches. The Prussian general in fact is and continues to be *merely* a general, the French military leader in his fine speech of welcome shows that he is at the same time a democrat, a republican and a pacifist.

A speech such as the French general delivered in welcoming his American guest, uttered, that is to say, in an official capacity and on an official occasion, would be an utter impossibility in the mouth of a Prussian general. Not even in the most intimate private conversation would or could a Prussian officer of high military rank express himself in this way. He *would* not do so because such pacifist views would be in complete contradiction to all his opinions, inherited as well as acquired. He *could* not do so because—even if against all expectation he were to entertain such heretical views—he would by giving them expression arouse a storm of indignation among those of his rank and profession, and he would soon find himself swept away by the hurricane. If it should happen—in far off days—that a Prussian general should think and dare to speak like General Dumas, then we in Prussian Germany shall have got “over the hill,” then the dawn of better days will shine upon us also, then we shall have peace from our militarists, and the world will at last have peace from us. God grant that such a day may soon appear !

### PAN-GERMANY HERE AND EVERYWHERE !

The differences which have recently developed between the ultra-annexationist Press of Pan-Germany and the merely annexationist Press of the Chancellor in no way modify the picture which I have outlined. Despite all these differences, both tendencies entirely agree in the main point which interests us here, that is to say, in the aversion from any effective pacifist organisation of the nations. These are all merely minor differences. The



fact that one party may want to annex a few square miles more, the other a few square miles less is a matter of no interest to us who are unconditional opponents of all conquest, who represent a European organisation of law, who oppose every peace that rests on violence. A war of conquest remains a war of conquest; murder and robbery remain murder and robbery, unaffected by the fact that the murderer may take somewhat more or less from his victim.

The victory of German arms would have been a victory of Pan-German ideas. Pan-Germany here and everywhere! That would have been the watchword which on the victorious conclusion of peace would have drowned all the reasonable considerations of men of insight, all the opposition of those with a sense of responsibility; this is the call that would have urged the Government to a suicidal peace, as it has urged it to this suicidal war. The work of intrigue of the Pan-Germans and the Imperialists is once more, as in the past, being pursued by subterranean methods rather than above ground. By means of sapping, digging and driving galleries the attempt is made to undermine the soil of the future peace and to bring pressure to bear on those in authority—it is a war of mining, not a struggle in open battle. It is only now and then from an explosion that it is possible to observe how the burrowing and the working is going on. *Tirpitz!* *Bethmann!* are the battle-cries. The struggle on the question of submarine warfare and the final victory of the Tirpitzians indicate the direction in which the struggle is developing. Further mining explosions, further surprises still await us, and it is by no means impossible that, before these lines appear in print, the Chancellor who merely wears a general's clothes may have made way for a real general, a man of the iron fist.

Even if only a half victory in the war is allowed them, the pernicious forces in Prussia and Germany who have conjured up this war will once again prove themselves to be stronger than the great masses of those who are endowed with insight and moderation. If before the war, when they were not taken seriously, when they were mocked and ridiculed, they had the power to force their ideas and their



will on the German people, how powerful will they be after a victorious war, when the greater part of the intellectual classes of Germany—despite all shades of difference—have followed in their track, accepted their language, and surrendered themselves weakly to their efforts under the levelling veil of the civil truce, or have even openly confessed their adherence. For this is in fact the characteristic feature of the civil truce, as it was conducted during the two first years of the war (a slight change has meanwhile taken place): War-aims, it was said, must not be discussed, but by this was meant that there should be no discussion of those war-aims which demanded forbearance from any act of violence or any annexation, which demanded the unimpaired re-establishment of Belgium, the restoration of the occupied French provinces, the establishment of a European peace organisation without a hegemony of this or that State. To discuss these war-aims was forbidden. But anyone who wanted to annex Belgium, the Russian Baltic provinces, parts of the eastern and northern territories of France, anyone who wanted to expropriate and deprive of their rights the annexed populations, anyone who wished by means of gigantic war-indemnities to cripple economically the States of Europe and make them tributaries of Germany—such a one was allowed free speech; no civil truce stood in his way. Men like Westarp, Bassermann, Spahn and Wiemer remained unmuzzled, but the Liebknechts and the Bernsteins, the Wehbergs and the Schückings were compelled to resort to subtle phrases in order to allow their thoughts to be guessed rather than recognised; for any free and candid word of warning would have thrown round their neck the noose of a trial for high treason.

#### EUROPEAN PEACE.

The statesman's thoughts against strategic considerations! That is the struggle which Bismarck had unremittingly to wage, and which, thanks to his conspicuous greatness and the backing he received from the old Emperor, he was also in most cases able to wage successfully. That is the struggle in which Bethmann-Hollweg succumbed in the last years before the outbreak of war



and above all in the last days of the crisis ; it is the struggle in which after a victorious war (as may with certainty be assumed from all that has come to light) he would once again have succumbed in putting forward the conditions of peace.

Our rulers and statesmen by their cowardly submission under the yoke of the Pan-Germans, by the ruthless provocation of this war which was " forced upon " them—forced upon them not by the external but by the internal enemies of the German people—have taken upon themselves an inexpressible load of guilt. In better times it used to be said of the Emperor William that his ambition was that he should one day be laid in his grave with the title of the Emperor of Peace. Emperor of Peace ! He might have gained this, the most beautiful of all titles of honour, if he had continued to offer to the poisonous influences of his immediate environment the opposition which he displayed in the first period of his government.

What, however, has become of the Emperor of Peace ? The bloodiest " war-lord " in the history of the world.

Inexpressible is the guilt of blood ; the dead will not rise again.

Unforgettable is the crime ; after thousands of years it will still live in the memory of men.

Lost beyond recall is the wealth that has been destroyed, the burned cities and villages, churches and palaces ; generations will not suffice to restore what has been annihilated.

There is only one salvation from all the tribulation ; there is only one blessing that can rise from all the curse ; there is only one resurrection from all the moral and material decay of the old world of our civilisation. And this salvation, this blessing, this resurrection is :

A European peace, a union of Europe (with the adhesion of countries outside Europe) to a peaceful alliance resting on law, to a league of nations, which will make wars for the future impossible, which will make the present the last of all wars.



Will the German Emperor adopt as his own this aim of his opponents, will he renounce every conquest, every act of violence, all oppression of other peoples, will he henceforth set right in the place of violence, will he transform himself from a brutal destroyer to one whose task is to build honourably? If so, then may he soon express himself in this sense in unambiguous words—and the sooner the better! That might perhaps still mean salvation for him and his people. But if not—as we have every occasion to believe—then the settlement on the Day of Judgment will only be all the more grievous, all the more annihilating—the settlement with the guilty one and his abettors, when only they sit on the seat of arraignment—the settlement with the unfortunate German people, if it does not timeously separate its fate from that of its seducers and corrupters, if it does not itself take the sword of justice in its hand, and make itself the master of its fate.

#### NATIONS OF EUROPE, PRESERVE YOUR HOLIEST POSSESSIONS!

It is only by organisation of the nations, in place of the present anarchy, that it is possible to give security against similar catastrophes to each individual nation and to all the nations taken together. Europe has become ripe for this organisation, and if the war with all its horrors has brought one good thing, it is that it has hastened this ripeness, that it has made perceptible to the eyes of the blindest the necessity of a radical change of system in the relations between the nations. The fruit hangs over-ripe on the tree, it is only necessary to shake and it will fall into our lap. Anyone who so refuses to shake the tree is a traitor to humanity and merits exclusion from the community of culture of the nations.

Will the future vision of a family of nations ordered on law, which a hundred and twenty years ago appeared to the great philosopher of Königsberg as the end to which development should tend, still remain a dream after this most fearful of all human catastrophes? It only depends on *willing* it, and the dream will become a reality.

“ Nations of Europe, preserve your holiest possessions ! ”



Let this imperial summons, directed against the yellow races of Asia, be the uniting call of the nations of Europe to a league of peace. But it is not against foreign nations, it is not against foreign races, it is not against foreign cultures or religions that this call is to be directed; let it be directed against the criminals within the country itself. Brand, punish, destroy the miscreants who find in war their advantage, the satisfaction of their ambition, the advancement of their material interests. Drive them out like mad dogs, ye nations of Europe, and stretch out your hands like brothers in the league of peace and friendship which you have always longed for and endeavoured to realise.

To-day neither the yellow nor the black peoples, neither the Slavs nor the Latins, neither the Anglo-Saxons nor the Germanic races—no people, no matter in what stage of civilisation, no matter in what stage of social and political development it may stand, any longer wants war and the oppression of other peoples. The African negro, like the Moroccan Arab, the Russian peasant like the Italian vine-dresser, the Norwegian fisher like the American cotton-planter, the Californian fruit-grower like the Chinese rice peasant, all the labouring and productive classes in the whole world want nothing else than peace and freedom for themselves and for others—freedom in their work, freedom in their leisure, freedom in the determination of their political and social condition. Let the people vote, free and unhampered, and you will find that no people has any wish for an extension of the country's frontiers, for power and greatness, for hegemony and world power. The cares of daily life already lie heavily enough on each individual and all, without exception, long for nothing else than a political and international arrangement which will alleviate as far as possible the cares and the burdens of each, and will assure to each the greatest possible measure of well-being and comfort.

Workmen and citizens, artists and men of learning, merchants and engineers, lawyers and doctors, financiers and manufacturers, in short all in every country who labour and work with their heads or their hands—with the exception, of course, of those for whom war and its



preparations bring material or ideal advantages—all have only the one wish, only the one longing that peace may be maintained between the nations, that there may be given to each individual people the possibility of quiet labour, of undisturbed development. In this effort for the maintenance of world-peace there is no distinction between the middle and the labouring classes, there is no distinction between the proletariat and the capitalists.<sup>1</sup> The wholesale merchants, manufacturers, exporters, whose business and industry depend on the vast development of the exchange of goods on the world market, desire peace as much as the workman or the official who is in their service. It is not the extension of the grandeur of their country that is in their interests, but the extension of the possibility of securing markets, which is sufficiently guaranteed by the system of commercial treaties and of the “open door.”

#### THE IMPERIALIST SUPERSTITION.

The extension of the territorial possession of a country always involves cost and danger—the cost of administration under conditions of military conquest, the danger of friction with other States, and of internal resistance in the territories acquired—dangers which always render new expenditure necessary for protection within and without. The acquisition of new territories is in the interests of the politicians of power, in the interests of the glory of the ruler, but it is not in the true interests of the peoples, properly understood. If the nations could raise their voices and decide, not a square mile of land would be added to another country without the consent of its inhabitants, not a drop of blood would be shed for the possession of new territories over which to hold sway. Speak with millions of Germans, Russians, Englishmen and Frenchmen, but let it be with each one in confidence, and each will assure you that he is entirely indifferent to the imperialistic plans of expansion of his politicians of power. After all,

<sup>1</sup> For proof that Capitalism as such (which is not identical with militant imperialism) is wrongly made responsible for wars, and in particular for this war, the reader is referred to the pamphlet *The Salient Point* by Germanicus (Zürich, Grütli, 1916), page 42 *et seq.*



the peasant does not gain a square yard of arable land as a result of the fact that thousands of square miles have been added to his State. The labourer does not earn a penny more in wages by reason of the fact that hundreds of thousands of new workmen have been joined to his country. Neither the merchant nor the manufacturer gains a penny more profit from his business, because a thousand other businesses of the same kind are able to compete with him inside the extended frontiers of his country. The lawyer does not gain a client, the doctor does not gain a patient by reason of the fact that hundreds of lawyers and doctors from the newly acquired territories rise up to compete against him. Precisely the contrary will in most cases happen (unless special circumstances counteract the effect): by the competition of their new compatriots the economic position of the old will be depressed.

A deception, a fiction of the most fatal and dangerous character is involved in this superstition, which is universally disseminated in our imperialistic age, that the greater and more powerful a country is, the richer and more happy will be the individual citizens. The evidence that this is a superstition is plain; it is only necessary to lay hold of it. In an earlier passage<sup>1</sup> I have already asked the question whether the individual Dutchman, the individual Dane, the individual Swiss, the individual Norwegian is less happy, less wealthy, less contented because their countries are smaller and less powerful than England, Germany, France, and Russia? Exactly the opposite is the case. They are happier, more contented, in part also more wealthy (if the wealth of the people is divided per head of the population) than the unfortunately-fortunate inhabitants of the great States. It was already so before the war, and what will be the position after the war? I believe that I am not going too far when I assert that a calculation made after the war with regard to the well-being of the people in the belligerent countries on the one hand, and in countries which have remained neutral on the other—making an accurate division between those who have been active and passive, including the enormous war debts

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I., p. 438.



apportioned per head of the population—will lead to the result that the individual Dutchman, Swede, Dane or Swiss—despite the enormous losses which the war has inflicted on these countries also—will be a small Cræsus compared with the individual German.

Russia is greater than all European countries taken together. Does the average Russian for this reason combine in his own person a greater measure of happiness and well-being than any other average European? Is not the average inhabitant of small Denmark a thousand times more happy and more enviable than the average inhabitant of the great Russia? France has many times as large a colonial possession as Germany. Have the French been for this reason, regarded purely from the economic point of view, richer and more happy than the Germans? If it should be the case that a greater measure of national well-being falls to the individual Frenchman than to the individual German, this fact does not depend on the colonial possessions of France—which is a matter of complete indifference to the individual Frenchman's comfort—but on the history of the development throughout the centuries of this fruitful country, which is in every respect favoured by the wealth of its soil and its geographical position, by the intelligence and the thrift of its inhabitants.

As a physically large man is not necessarily more efficient than a small one—history, indeed, points to many examples to the contrary, *e.g.* Napoleon—so there is no manner of inherent probability that a large nation will be more efficient in its actions than a small. The effort towards national unity must not of course be condemned or represented as purposeless. The natural impulse in this direction is inherent in all nationalities which are knit together by language, race and culture. Yet even this impulse to national cohesion must not be driven too far; it must not simply ignore all that has been historically evolved. Unless it is to revolutionise the whole of the old world and declare war in perpetuity, it must, as the circumstances require, be satisfied with the national kernel and leave outside the national frontiers this or that part of the outer husk.

The effort after national unity has nothing to do with the morbid imperialistic impulse to extension stretching



beyond the national frontiers. It is this that we oppose. This is the fostering soil of the present war ; this will be the germ of a new series of wars unless the nations, the great masses, the nine-tenths in all States, combine together and exclaim to their rulers and to their ruling classes : " We want no expansion. We want peace ; we want freedom ; we want social justice. Leave to each the frontiers given by nature and history ! The earth has room for all ! "

### BÜLOW AND BETHMANN

That the greatness of a country, and in particular the greatness of its colonial possessions, stands in no relationship to the economic prosperity and well-being of its inhabitants is a fact which is most strikingly proved by the comparison between the development of trade and industry in the case of Germany and England during the last twenty-five years. On this point I have already given comparative statistics in *J'accuse* (p. 40, *et seq.*). In his volume *Deutsche Politik*,<sup>1</sup> which appeared recently, Prince Bülow rightly and proudly points out that " with her foreign trade of 22,500 million (marks) Germany was in 1913 second only to Great Britain with her 27,000 millions ; she was consequently the second greatest commercial power in the world." This was in peace, he it observed. And nevertheless Bülow maintains—like the last of the Pan-Germans—that we have been denied " the place in the sun," and he defends the war which was meant to gain for us this sunny place. Here we have the same lack of logic—or honesty—as dominates the whole of German intelligence.

The book by the former Chancellor mentioned above—a new elaboration of the observations on German policy which Prince Bülow had published before the war in the compilation entitled, " Germany under the Emperor William II "—affords in many ways so characteristic a picture of the views prevailing in Germany on the origins and the aims of the war, that it is worth while to consider it somewhat more fully.

Prince Bülow in his exposed position may be excused for

<sup>1</sup> [English translation : *Imperial Germany*. Cassell.]



breaking out in a panegyric on the personality of the German Emperor, whose "devotion to duty and that fearlessness which are the traditional heritage of the Hohenzollerns" have impressed and more firmly rooted the monarchic principle in the hearts of the people. The Prince naturally regards these matters from the princely and courtly point of view. What the people think and feel does not penetrate into the palaces of princes. The future will prove that there is nothing in the past history of Prussia and Germany which has given so severe a blow to the monarchical idea as the intentional provocation of this unprecedented wholesale carnage—an action which, whatever influences may have been operative in the environment of the Emperor, is to be traced back to *his* decision, *his* will, *his* responsibility. As the recognition of this fact is to-day the common property of the whole world, so later on when the German people awakens and comes to its senses, it will become the common property of the German people also, and not until then will it be ascertained whether the monarchic principle in Germany has been impressed on the people and more deeply rooted as a result of this war, or whether it has thereby received its death-blow.

It is natural that Prince Bülow also should adopt the theory of the "war of defence." He also speaks of the "hostility and desires for revenge, both old and new, in the West, the East and beyond the Channel." He also denies the pernicious effect of Prussian militarism which he calls "the foundation of our State and the guarantee of our future." He also speaks of the "irreconcilability of France" which had been only too clearly manifested. In short, a man who cannot be denied to have a certain fineness of spirit, a certain elevation of culture which rises far above Prussian Junkerdom and officialdom, despite this moves in his dissertations and arguments regarding the origin of this war on the same low level as any Pan-German general or leader-writer. This is one of the most pathetic indications of the German frame of mind, and entirely confirms the diagnosis which in another book I gave regarding this morbid condition :

The circle of ideas which thus marks the authoritative parties and the members of the Government in Germany moves everywhere



on the outworn lines of the past. These people have learned nothing and have forgotten nothing, and even the ghastly lessons of this war have been unable to divert them from their mistaken ways. As in the past, bungling, intriguing, arming, fighting will go on, unless the German people raises its voice, warning, threatening and finally demanding. That must happen, and it will happen.

The ascertainment of the existence of this state of mind, which is confirmed in an appalling manner by the present observations of Prince Bülow, would be possessed merely of historical value if it related exclusively to the past. Unfortunately, however, this state of mind will continue to be operative in the future also, in the near future relating to the end of the war and in the more remote future when the peace of Europe is being shaped. And it is just because of this effect in the future that we opponents of the dominant system must continue to raise our voice again and again in warning and in threats, and must exclaim to the rulers of Germany : “ Your ideas regarding the future configuration of Europe mean nothing more than new tension, new armaments, new explosions. Incurable plungers into debt that you are, do you want to burden your enormous debit account from the past with continual new items recorded against you for the future ? ”

How does the most gifted German statesman since Bismarck conceive of the future of Germany and of Europe after this war ? Let him speak for himself :

It goes without saying that the main object of the war must be to obtain for Germany, not only adequate compensation, but also guarantees which will prevent any future war under the same, or similar, unfavourable conditions.

Germany will in future require protection against hostility and desires for revenge, both old and new, in the West, the East and beyond the Channel ; such protection can only be found in the increase of her own power. Our enemies will also strengthen their armaments on land and sea. We must see to it that our frontiers and shores are strengthened and rendered less easy of attack than at the beginning of this war ; not in furtherance of that desire for world dominion with which we are falsely credited, but for the maintenance of our present position. The outcome of the war must be a positive, not a negative one. To prevent our annihilation, loss of territory or dismemberment, to ensure that we be not bled to the last farthing, that is not the point ; it is a question of definite gain in the form of real security and guarantees, as an indemnity for hitherto unheard-of labours and suffering, and also as a pledge



for the future. In view of the ill-feeling against us which this war is bound to bring in its train, the mere restoration of the *status quo ante bellum* would mean for Germany not gain, but loss. Only if our power, political, economic and military, emerges from this war so strengthened that it considerably outweighs the feelings of enmity that have been aroused shall we be able to assert with a clear conscience that our position in the world had been bettered by the war.<sup>1</sup>

There again we have from an authoritative source the German war-aims naked and undisguised: increased protection of Germany against future attacks, sufficient compensation for the past, real securities and guarantees for the future, the strengthening of Germany's position from a political, economic and military point of view, the refusal of the *status quo ante bellum*. Even Prince Bülow has thus learned nothing, and forgotten nothing, as a result of the experiences of this war. So much is this the case that he further cites the extension of Prussia's power after 1866 and of Germany's after 1870 as encouraging examples for a further extension of power after this war. That the 1871 peace of violence is one of the weightiest among the more remote causes of this war is a truth which has not yet dawned on the most astute of living German statesmen. That a peace of violence dictated by a conqueror, which can purchase an extension of the power of one only at the price of a diminution of the power of the other, can never create a really enduring state of peace is a historical and philosophical fact which also has not yet become familiar to the intellect of a Bülow, who in other respects is by no means afflicted with narrowness of vision. That it is only by a radical change of system, only by the abolition of the former international anarchy, only by an organisation of peace on a basis of law that an enduring guarantee of peace is possible in Europe—this is a fact which has long been recognised by the statesmen of the Entente and of America, but to a Bülow such pacifist ideas still appear to be so Utopian that he does not even consider them worthy of mention. The former Chancellor still appears in the same intellectual equipment which distinguished him when, as leader of German policy, he inexorably opposed, during the second Hague Conference, all ideas of progress in international law. The reader will recall his unsympathetic

<sup>1</sup> [English Trans. page xli.]



attitude towards the most important problems of the Hague Conference of 1907, towards the problem of arbitration, the limitation of armaments, etc. Prince Bülow to-day is exactly the same man as he then was—a worthy successor of his predecessors, a worthy predecessor of his successors.

There are only two paths to the future configuration of Europe : the path of power or the path of right. There is no third way. When a man like Prince Bülow has not yet gained any realisation of the fact that the principle of power has for ever collapsed in the present war, that only a system of law can save Europe from the whirlpool, it is possible to imagine the state of mind which prevails in the lower regions of Prussian-German bureaucracy and of the world of culture. The most recent utterances of Prince Bülow cast an appalling light on Germany's intelligence ; they cannot but fill with the deepest grief every friend of Germany, of Europe, and of humanity. On this basis, as outlined by Prince Bülow, a conclusion of peace would be possible, only if Germany and her allies emerged from the war as undisputed conquerors. Since this possibility is excluded, with such war-aims as these the war will necessarily be indefinitely prolonged. Even, however, if the impossible were possible, even if it were conceivable that Germany could dictate the conditions of peace, Bülow's peace would again be nothing more than the peace which we had before 1914 : a latent state of war, a masked war.

When one reads Prince Bülow, one almost begins to forgive Herr von Bethmann. Poor Germany, where the first in office are at the same time the last in progressive thought ! Poor Europe, where such retrograde minds exercise decisive influence on the destinies of nations.

## B

### COMMENTS ON THE CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH OF APRIL 5TH, 1916.<sup>1</sup>

*Lasciate ogni speranza !* All hope abandon ye who await with ardent expectancy a peace, a peace at an early date, an enduring peace, a European peace.

<sup>1</sup> This hitherto unpublished essay was written in April, 1916, and amplified by a number of additions relating to later events.



The speech delivered by the Chancellor on April 5th brings to nought all your hopes.

Now the cat is out of the bag, now the mask has fallen, now it is possible to see plainly and undisguisedly the peace for which Germany is striving, but which in all the earlier speeches from the Government Bench had still been veiled from a sense of shame.

Even before now there has been advanced as the German war-aim the creation of the "political, military and economic guarantees which will protect Germany from a future attack." In his speech in the December sitting of the Reichstag (1915) Herr von Bethmann had already become more distinct. Even then he had already spoken of "guarantees" in Belgium, which would prevent this land from being again misused by Germany's enemies as a "deploying-ground" against Germany. Even then he had represented the "doors of invasion in the East and the West" as a danger for Germany which must be removed for the future. Even then he had spoken in a veiled, although in a sufficiently transparent, manner of the Russian fortifications and railways on the eastern frontier of Germany. But all the same these postulates of a German peace of violence were still advanced in a modestly shame-faced manner, with reservations attached, so that they offered to the spokesmen of the Social Democratic majority the possibility of an intentional misunderstanding, and consequently of a concurrence expressive of their confidence.

To-day every shame-concealing rag has fallen. Herr von Bethmann has become plain, only all too plain. The leaders of the civil parties have even surpassed him in plainness of language, and if, after the speeches of the Chancellor and that of Dr. Spahn, the speaker for the Social Democratic majority is to-day still confident "that we have no thought of violating other nations," then this member of the party develops such a degree of *naïveté* or such intentional dullness of hearing that one should feel constrained to deny his competence to act as a representative of the people on the grounds of his intellectual or physical insufficiency.





## WAR OF DEFENCE, NOT PREVENTIVE WAR.

The Chancellor's speech of April 5th is in every respect one of the most tragic documents of the time. It proves in the first place that the German Government, and the civil parties, including the majority of the Social Democrats, along with it, adhere without remission to the lie that Germany did not want this war, that it was attacked by its enemies and that it is waging a war of defence. Since the beginning of the war this lie has been repeated so many hundreds of thousands of times that, according to a familiar psychological process, its inventors themselves have perhaps already begun to believe it. This would be the only mitigating circumstance which could be allowed in favour of the responsible authors of this German war of aggression.

The refutation of the lie of defence is to be found in my books. In view of the Chancellor's speech of April 5th and all the earlier speeches from the same quarter, there is no occasion to discuss the question of the preventive war. Once again Herr von Bethmann refrained from implying in anything that he said that the Entente Powers, while not wanting *this* war, intended to begin at a later date against Germany and Austria an aggressive war which it was necessary to anticipate by the provocation of the present war. Not a word, not a hint in this sense, is to be found in any of the speeches so far delivered by the Chancellor, in any official or semi-official statement of the German Government. Herr von Bethmann once more repeats the familiar litany that the three enemy Powers were knit together against us by lust of conquest, desire for revenge and jealousy, that they had endeavoured "to turn back the wheel of history into times for ever gone," that they had wanted war in order to annihilate and crush us, and that we had taken the field merely to defend our Fatherland and to keep the enemy far from our frontiers:

It was to preserve the unity and freedom of Germany that we went into battle, the whole nation united to a man. It is this united and free Germany that our enemies wish to destroy. . . . It was in our defence that we took the field, but that which was is no more. History with unrelenting steps has moved forwards. There is no turning back. . . .

In this war-aim (the annihilation and dismemberment of Germany)



London, Paris and Petrograd are at one. And with this we contrast the other fact, namely, that when the catastrophe broke over Europe we, not as in 1870 when the Reichsland and the Empire were present to the mind of every German as the obvious prize of victory, had only the one aim—to guard and to maintain ourselves and to keep the enemy far from our home. . . .

It is for Germany, not for a foreign portion of land, that the sons of Germany bleed and die.

It will be seen that Herr von Bethmann proclaims anew the thesis of the war of defence for the purpose of warding off a present attack, and thus he repudiates with the utmost emphasis the idea of a preventive war against future dangers.

This is the official standpoint of the German Government to which they have adhered from the beginning—a standpoint which they were bound to choose in order to enkindle the necessary popular enthusiasm at the beginning of the war, and to which they must adhere until the end in order to keep the patriotic flame alive. It is impossible to effect much to-day in the case of an intelligent and peace-loving people by the appeal to the preventive war, which, when all is said, remains an aggressive war and can be justified only by reference to future dangers which are not readily demonstrable. It is necessary to bring before the eyes of such a people a menace to house and hearth, to home and Fatherland; it is necessary to use as a bugbear a real attack in the present, if it is to be inspired to such enormous sacrifices in life and wealth, as are demanded in this war.

This explains the lie of the enemy's attack, which is still repeated to-day, designed of course only for the great masses of the people, and not for the initiated.

For us, the revolutionary opponents of the whole dominant *régime*, the opponents of the political and economic order in Germany, the struggle is thereby made easier. We are not called upon to inquire what enterprises England, France and Russia might somewhere have undertaken against Germany at some date in the future; for on this the German Government itself does not rely.<sup>1</sup> We

<sup>1</sup> In the foregoing sections of this work I have, for reasons of prudence and completeness, undertaken this inquiry also, in order to fight with their own weapons the Preventionists who, unlike the Government, do not occupy the ground of defence.



have only to investigate what the Entente Powers did in fact undertake against Germany, whether they really wanted and provoked this war, whether they attacked Germany and forced her into a position of justifiable defence—Yes or No? These questions I have investigated by reference to all the facts and documents extant, and have answered them with an unqualified No :

Germany, with her ally Austria, provoked the war, not the enemies of Germany. Germany was not attacked; it was Germany that attacked. It is therefore not Germany, but Germany's enemies, who are in a state of defence.

#### CAUSE OF THE WAR—WAR-AIMS.

When this point is made clear, the ground is cut away from under the speech of the German Chancellor, as well as from all his earlier and later speeches. This conclusion is, however, of service not only in forming a historical judgment on the past; it is equally of use in enabling us to gain the correct standpoint in all questions relating to the future, above all in the evaluation of the war-aims of the two parties.

The war-aims stand in the most intimate connection with the cause of the war. The future peace configuration of Europe depends on the recognition of who and what it was that broke the peace. The seat of the evil must be recognised before it is healed and guarded against for the future.

It is on the basis of the war of defence that the German war-aims, as Herr von Bethmann has now outlined them with the utmost lucidity, are built. Germany has been attacked, and must secure herself against similar attacks by means of ramparts of defence on the East and the West :

Mr. Asquith in his peace conditions speaks of the principle of nationality. If he does so, and if he places himself in the situation of the unconquered and unconquerable opponent, can he then assume that Germany will voluntarily restore to reactionary Russia the peoples liberated by her and her allies between the Baltic sea and the Volhynian marshes, whether they be Poles,



Lithuanians, Letts, or inhabitants of the Baltic provinces ? No, Russia must not a second time cause her armies to march against the unprotected frontiers of East and West Prussia, nor must she with the help of French money make use of Germany as a door of invasion and enter into the unprotected land of the Vistula.

These are the war-aims towards the East.

And what is the war-aim towards the West ?

And if anyone believes that we will give up, without obtaining complete security for our future, the lands occupied on the West, on which the blood of our people has been shed, I say that we will create real guarantees that Belgium will not become an Anglo-French vassal State, that it will not be used in a military and economic sense as a bulwark against Germany. Here also there can be no *status quo ante* ; here also Germany cannot again expose to Welsch influences the Flemish nationality which has been so long kept down. We want a nation corresponding to its capacity and development, secured on the basis of its language and its inner unity ; we do not want neighbours who will again unite against us to throttle us ; we want neighbours who will co-operate with us, and with whom we shall be able to co-operate for our mutual advantage (stormy applause). Has not peaceful German labour, peaceful German industry continued to co-operate in Antwerp for the welfare of the country ? Even during the war has it not been our endeavour to restore the life of the country as far as possible ? The remembrances of this war will long vibrate in the sorely afflicted country (exclamation of Liebknecht : Your fault !). In the interests of both parties we cannot permit new wars to arise out of this.

What the Chancellor means to do in detail with the various peoples on whom he intends to pour out the cornucopia of German glory remains for the present his own secret.<sup>1</sup> He openly admits that he intends to effect very material alterations in the map of Europe : "After such enormous events history does not know the *status quo ante*." We who are on principle opposed to any policy of violence and annexation are but little interested to know in what forms it is proposed to carry out the conjunction with the various nationalities which are destined to take their place in the German Empire. For us it is sufficient to know that now, after the Chancellor's speech a number of trees in the European forest are to be marked with the ominous cross ; that they are destined to fall in

<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile however, as we shall see later, it has become sufficiently clear.



the imminent campaign of deforestation. For us and for all friends of a speedy and enduring European peace the tragic fact so ascertained is sufficient to bury our hopes, or at any rate to postpone them for so long a time that the European peoples will have bled to death before their fulfilment approaches.

Bethmann's statements with regard to the Eastern territories are fairly unambiguous—unambiguous in so far as it is proposed to separate these territories from the Empire of the Tsar, and unite them in part directly to Prussia (the Russian Baltic Provinces), and in part link them to Austria and Germany as a kind of common Reichsland (Poland), maintaining an appearance of independence.

The plans which are entertained against the independence of the former Kingdom of Belgium are equally quite clear in so far as it is proposed to abolish its independence and subject the country to German influence in an economic, political and military sense. These are the "real guarantees" of which Herr von Bethmann speaks, and to which a very precise expression was given in the speeches of Messrs. Spahn, Westarp and Stresemann which followed. In both directions, towards the West and the East, the question is one of annexations on the largest scale, of rich morsels such as the Prussian stomach has never hitherto swallowed at one gulp, although they will produce even worse results than the extinction of Alsace-Lorraine, which in the course of half a century has not yet been digested.

#### THE KINGDOM OF POLAND.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile Germany's efforts at liberation towards the East have taken a firm shape by the proclamation of the new Kingdom of Poland in the beginning of November, 1916.

This action in itself, and the more detailed reasons for carrying it into effect as given in the Imperial Manifesto and in the semi-official Berlin and Viennese Press, prove anew that it is not possible to expect from the allied Imperial Powers anything for the furtherance of the future

<sup>1</sup> The addition was written in December, 1916.



pacifist organisation of Europe. The *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and the *Wiener Fremdenblatt*—the two recognised mouthpieces of the German and Austrian Governments—state with all the clearness that could be desired that the liberation of Poland from Russian domination is not being carried out from the idealistic effort to help to restore to freedom and independence a nation that had long been enslaved, but that it is rather being effected in the interests of the security of Germany and Austria against future Russian attacks. The actual words of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (November 5th, 1916) are :

Beyond all the pros and the cons there stands imperiously the principle that for the sake of our own future we durst not allow Poland to be restored to Russia. Germany's security demands that for all time to come Russian armies should not be able to break into the Empire and divide Silesia from East and West Prussia, issuing from a Poland constructed as a starting point for military sallies. A kind fate will not always place at our disposal a Hindenburg who despite such frontiers is able to dam back the Russian flood.

The population of the gigantic empire in the East increases by three millions a year. Shorter, strongly guarded frontiers will be the surest foundation for a tranquil relationship towards our Russian neighbour.

The *Wiener Fremdenblatt* (November 5th, 1916) also repeats on this occasion that the Central Powers had been "compelled to the struggle by Russia's impulse to conquest, and by her claim to a position of suzerainty over the whole of the Slav races," and it then proceeds :

For the Central Powers it is of the highest value that the establishment of an independent Poland alters their eastern frontier. A serious menace for the Central Powers was involved in the fact that the middle course of the Vistula was occupied with Russian fortresses, that Russian troops have in places stood only a few days' march from the Carpathians, and at a short distance from Breslau and Danzig, and that the Allied forces had to defend a line the extent of which could scarcely be surveyed. . . . It is therefore a great military gain for us that our frontier will be pushed back. The alteration of the frontier means at the same time an alteration in relative strength. The Central Powers are made stronger, and Russia weaker, a result which increases the prospects of the maintenance of peace.

In the Imperial proclamations themselves the idea of the future security of Germany and Austria is expressed,



although in a somewhat more indefinite form : the desires of the Poles for political and national development are to be fulfilled by the Imperial neighbouring States only "in adhesion to the two allied Powers," and only "with the requisite regard for the general political conditions of Europe and for the well-being and security of their own lands and people." These official and semi-official statements in themselves leave no doubt with regard to the tragic fact that the Central Powers have not got so far as to recognise that it is not by resort to a policy of power that the future peace of Europe can be enduringly founded, but only by way of an organisation resting on law, imposing on all peoples equal rights and duties, and guaranteeing to all equal security and equal protection against attack.

The proclamation of the new Kingdom of Poland "in adhesion to the two allied Powers" and "with the requisite regard for the well-being and security of Germany and Austria" is merely an annexation in a veiled form. It does not rest on the free will of the population, who were not asked even for the sake of appearances to express their opinion by a plebiscite. The Poles are to have granted to them a king of German blood, whom they have not called and to whose rule they have not voluntarily submitted. Above all, however, and this is the culminating point in the act of violence, they are to receive an army of their own, whose "organisation, training, and leadership is to be arranged in common understanding" with Germany and Austria. Further, a point on which there can be no doubt in view of the official manifesto, the semi-official commentaries and the speech of the German Governor-General, the intention is that this army should even at the present moment be trained and led out to "active participation in the struggle for liberation," to use the words of General von Beseler.

What does this mean ? It means that the inhabitants of a land which has been occupied in war are, even during the war and therefore before the occupation can be transformed into an acquisition by the conclusion of peace, to be compelled to lend assistance to the military forces of the occupying State against their own State. Never in recent history has a more flagrant violation of the most elementary



principles of international law been committed. It is nowhere said in the official proclamation or in the semi-official commentaries that the formation of the Polish army was to depend on the free will of the population or of the troops who were to be raised. The later emphasis of its "voluntary" character, to be found in a manifesto of the Governor-General Beseler, was evoked by the burning protest of the whole civilised world, and bears too clearly on its forehead the imprint of a specious manœuvre to deceive anyone regarding the true meaning of the formation of the Polish army. As the Polish people was not asked for its opinion on the formation of the new "Kingdom," even less will it be consulted with regard to the recruiting and the organisation of the Polish army. Already we read in the paper containing the ordinances for Poland that the Polish regiments which are to be newly created are "for the present to be incorporated in the German army," that the Polish soldiers, along with their Polish Fatherland, are to take the oath of fidelity to the monarchs of the two Central Powers "as sureties for the Polish State." By an assembly of notabilities—the choice of those to be summoned will remain with the German authorities—approval will be given to the organisation of the Polish army, and thus a so-called "voluntary legion" will be made out of the compulsory Polish army, after the model of the Polish Legion which exists in Austria, only with the difference that the latter really rests on a voluntary basis, whereas the new Polish army will bear only the semblance of voluntariness.

The following sentence from the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* is quite charming:

In allowing the Poles the gradual formation of their own military forces, the Central Powers satisfy in their case a burning desire which is easily to be understood in a nation like this, endowed with such high military qualities.

In other words: the Poles who have hitherto had to bleed for Russia cannot wait in patience to bleed now for Germany and Austria *against* Russia.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This ardour for the struggle on the part of the Poles certainly appears to have considerably cooled down in the sequel; it also appears that the provisional government of the future kingdom,



This formation of a Polish army against the State to which the Poles still belong in law is, as I have already said, unique in the recent history of the nations. Even Napoleon I. did not oblige the States which he had defeated to place their troops at his disposal for his further campaigns until the various conclusions of peace. Even the ancient Romans, though they may have led defeated nations into slavery, did not compel them to fight against their brothers.

The Hague Convention with regard to the Laws and Customs of War on Land, dated October 18th, 1907, considered the contingency of compulsory service in war applied to the inhabitants of an occupied land as so inconceivable that it did not even direct any provision against it. Article 23 of the agreement is directed against compelling "the nationals of the adverse party to take part in the operations of war directed against their country." It is clear, however, that the Hague Conference had not thought of the possibility that a modern belligerent State might compel the *whole* population of occupied territories to render military service against their former State. Articles 44 and 45 of the Convention are restricted to forbidding the occupy-

summoned and composed by the Central Powers entirely as suited their pleasure, is in no way willing to answer the expectations of the high protectors in the matter of the formation of the army and with regard to other measures. The reaction of the Russian Revolution, which holds out to the Poles a prospect of a restoration of their old kingdom in its full extent, with full freedom and independence, has gradually, in the course of the spring and the summer of 1917, rendered the position created by the occupying Powers in Russian Poland completely untenable, and has revealed the Austro-German liberation of Poland as what it was from the beginning, as a domination of force, as a veiled annexation. Continual conflicts between the provisional Government and the Governor-General, refusals to take the oath on the part of troops who were unwilling to pledge themselves to military fidelity to the occupying Powers, wholesale house to house visitations, arrests and criminal prosecutions of eminent leaders of the Polish peoples—these are the marks of the present position in Poland (July, 1917), which the late Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg shortly before his retirement described by saying that the Polish question did not admit of a thorough solution. To-day they have already arrived at the point of wanting to solve it "thoroughly" by the means which have been applied for half a century to the solution of the question of Alsace-Lorraine—with the measure of success that is well known.



ing Power applying compulsion to the population of occupied territories to furnish information about the army of the other belligerent party, or to take an oath to the hostile Power. Had the compulsory wholesale raising of entire populations been considered possible, it would not have been considered sufficient to prohibit these much more insignificant coercive actions.

The whole Hague Convention proceeds from the principle that military occupation during a war is temporary possession, but does not constitute a transference of property. The latter can legally be accomplished only by the treaty of peace. The occupying State (according to Article 55 of the Convention) :

Shall regard itself only as administrator and usufructuary of the public buildings, immovable property, forests and agricultural undertakings. . . . It must protect the capital of these properties and administer it according to the rules of usufruct.

Thus the State in occupation is not even to dispose of lifeless goods as if they were his property. How much less then is he allowed to treat living men as his "subjects," to be ordered, as his whim or his advantage may require, to their own "struggle for liberation"? This is one act of violence—no doubt it did not succeed, yet nevertheless it was intended—which, like all the rest, will be bitterly avenged on the perpetrators. The logic of this formation of a compulsory army would, moreover, demand that Russian prisoners of war of Polish nationality should also be compelled to render military service in the new Polish army. This would be a new infringement against the Hague Convention (Article 6), which requires that prisoners of war should be used only on works which "have nothing to do with the operations of the war." In making this restricted provision also, no thought was given to the possibility that a belligerent State might compel prisoners of war to render military service against their own country. In this war Germany and Austria have, in fact, made an international law of their own for their private use, and on sea as well as on land they have surpassed all that was formerly considered possible in this sphere.

Much as the Poles might hail the restoration of the kingdom of which they had so long dreamed, they might



well, however, have every reason to suspect the Powers who bring this fatal gift into their home. *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. The liberator who appears before the Polish people with the Polish Royal Crown in the one hand and the Prussian Pickelhaube in the other, who in one sentence promises the hapless Poles their freedom and independence, but in the next pledges them to "adhesion" in a military and political sense to the reactionary Imperial Powers—such a liberator will not bring to the sorely tried land the resurrection and the independence for which it has longed for a century and a half. He will bring it a new master who, to judge from his past actions, will be even worse than the old.

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While the Emperor of Austria, simultaneously with the establishment of the new Polish Kingdom, has granted to the Galician Poles, who have remained within the monarchy, an extended autonomy for the purpose of their national and economic development, in the case of the Prussian Pole everything has so far remained in the old grooves. There is no indication that it is proposed to repeal or even alleviate any of these Draconian Polish laws, which most grievously oppress and restrict the Polish population of Prussia in their language, their culture and their political activity, indeed even in their private property. That same State, which professes to bring freedom and independence to the Russian Poles, still continues to treat the Prussian Poles like citizens of a lower order.<sup>1</sup> This inconsistent policy is not only untrue and hypocritical, it is also from the Prussian standpoint imprudent and dangerous. The position which Prussia is now establishing in the East in constructing a Polish Kingdom on the frontier of the Prussian Polish provinces is exactly the same condition of affairs as that which Austria-Hungary considered so intolerable on her southern frontier that it felt impelled to remove it, even at the risk of a European war, that is to say the existence of a neighbouring Slav Kingdom which was bound to exercise

<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, six months after the proclamation of the Kingdom of Poland and nearly three years after the outbreak of war, the notorious expropriation paragraph has at last been removed from the Polish laws which otherwise continue in existence.



an irresistible attraction on the oppressed Serbs of the Hapsburg Monarchy. Only two alternatives are conceivable: Either the new kingdom under the pressure of natural relations will become really independent of Prussian Germany, in which case it will exercise an irresistible power of attraction on the Prussian Poles, strengthen their national aspirations and make them a real "Irredenta," or else the new Kingdom of Poland, under the semblance of independence, will become no more than an Austro-Prussian dependency, in which case a new Alsace-Lorraine will arise in the East, a new germ of inner struggles and external unrest.

In either case the Austro-German policy of violence which to-day, before the war is decided, has already led to a forcible separation of valuable territories from Russia, will not merely indefinitely prolong the war, but after the conclusion of the acute state of war will once again place Europe in a latent state of warfare. The signs of the time point to an organisation of Europe resting on law, indeed beyond Europe to an organisation of all the civilised States of the world. By their act of violence already undertaken during the war, although it is veiled in the transparent cloak of happiness conferred on an oppressed people, Germany and Austria show that they are not striving for an organisation of law, but merely for the security of their own Power for the future.

The manifesto of November 5th, 1916, is a historical document inasmuch as it again stamps the two Imperial Powers as the enemies of all progress and of all development of civilised humanity to higher forms of existence.

#### THE ANNEXATION OF FLEMISH TERRITORIES.<sup>1</sup>

Although the German Government did not name their conditions of peace either in their peace offer of December 12th, 1916, or in their answer to the Peace Note of President Wilson, but rather restricted themselves to the statement that they would "bring" these conditions to the conference of the belligerent Powers,<sup>2</sup> yet it is not difficult to recognise

<sup>1</sup> Addition written in March, 1917.

<sup>2</sup> I treat these matters fully in the later article "Bethmann the Offerer of Peace."



the German demands in the matter of war-aims from the official and semi-official utterances of the German Government as well as from the statements of the authoritative political parties.

In the first place, after the new creation in the East of the alleged independent Kingdom of Poland which in reality is controlled by Germany and Austria, there continues to be the establishment of a condition of affairs in the West which is usually described as "security of the German frontier against English and French invasion," but which in fact amounts to a suppression or at any rate an impairment of the sovereignty and independence of the Kingdom of Belgium. In Germany great play is constantly made of the words "annexation" or "non-annexation" of Belgium, and even the Chancellor in his great "pacifist" speech of November 9th, 1916, emphasises that the annexation of Belgium had never been described by him as the war-aim of Germany. This is no doubt true, but Herr von Bethmann has always emphasised that Germany must procure "real guarantees of power" of a political, military and economic character, in order that Belgium might not again be used as a "door of invasion" or as a "deploying ground for hostile attacks" against Germany.

The last positive utterances of Herr von Bethmann in this sense were contained in his speech in the Reichstag on April 5th. Since that day he has always withdrawn on the negative aspect of the matter, stating that he does *not* want to annex Belgium, and this withdrawal he has constantly covered up by similar statements from his voluntary bodyguard Schcidemann. In these circumstances it was of inestimable value, and served to illumine any doubts that might have arisen, that recently, in January, 1917, in the middle of the European-American peace discussions, the mouthpiece of the German Government, the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, undisguisedly proclaimed anew the positive German war-aims with regard to Belgium.

On January 23rd, Wolff's Bureau circulated a lengthy article from the semi-official paper, which apparently was devoted merely to a polemic against the English Government, but in reality had for its object to prepare for the annexation of Belgium, and to explain this by reference



to Germany's need of guarantees, a purpose to which unambiguous expression was given in the concluding paragraph of the article. After a lengthy exposition of the alleged shifting attitude of the English Government on the question of Belgian neutrality, an attitude dictated only by their own English interests, emphasis being laid on certain utterances of Salisbury (1887), Gladstone (1870), and Grey (1914) (a highly assailable account, into which I have no occasion to go more closely in this place) the article of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* concludes as follows :

From this there follows with compelling necessity, so far as Germany is concerned, this conclusion : The condition which makes it possible for England, as it may choose, to recognise and protect the neutrality of Belgium or to deny and sacrifice it is an untenable one. Germany must be secured against the possibility of Belgium remaining as in the past a door of invasion which English egotism, according to its needs, can open or shut towards the East or West.

With this semi-official utterance of the German Government we have again found firm ground for passing judgment on the German war-aims towards the West, which threatened to elude us owing to the hazy and nebulous statements made by the Chancellor and his adherents since the spring of 1916 : Germany definitively refuses, for the sake of its future security, to re-establish the Kingdom of Belgium in its unrestricted sovereignty and independence.

The above semi-official article of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was, however, only the prelude to a much more distinct official announcement of the German Government, which not only placed beyond all doubt the intentions with regard to the annexation of Belgium both in their nature and scope, but also contained the beginning of the execution of these intentions. Wolff's Telegraph Bureau published, on March 4th, 1917, the following report :

Yesterday the Chancellor received a deputation from the Council of Flanders who conveyed the wishes and the resolutions of this Council, as these have been brought to the knowledge of the world in an appeal dated February 4th, 1917. The spokesman of the deputation, who recalled the words in the Chancellor's speech of April 5th, 1916, and the measures previously taken, propounded the active Flemish programme of an inner autonomy of Flanders



on the basis of Netherlandish speech and culture. In his introductory remarks, the Chancellor explained that he had gladly complied with the wish of the council for a personal discussion. He recalled the common bonds which united the Germans and the Flemings, and assured the deputation that the Emperor also intended to meet their justifiable wishes so far as the situation permitted. In concert with the Belgian Governor-General, preparatory measures had been taken to give to the Flemish people the possibility of independence which it would scarcely be able to gain by its own strength. In the two parts of Belgium which must be divided by the language frontier, an administrative division will be carried out. On the peace negotiations and later, the German Empire will do everything to encourage and secure the free development of the Flemish people.

This open confession by the German Government of an annexation—despite all denials, I venture to repeat this word—of the Flemish part of Belgium, just at the time when the whole of Germany was being inspired anew to the “defence of the Fatherland” on account of the refusal of the so-called German peace offer—this new official confession of a “liberation” of the Flemish people, such as had already been included by the Chancellor in the peace programme contained in his speech of April 5th, 1916, is of inestimable value. With the reception of a Flemish deputation which demands the “inner autonomy of Flanders on the basis of Netherlandish speech and culture,” there begins the same farce which had been carried out a few months previously in connection with the liberation of Poland from the Russian yoke. The comedy in the West, assuming of course that the course of the war will permit the execution of Germany’s intentions, will end with the same concluding act as that in the East, even if perhaps the *dénouement* should take place in a somewhat different form. The result will in both cases be the same: the conjunction of the predominantly Flemish part of Belgium (with which the comments in the Press already include Brussels as the capital) with the German Empire, and as a preparation towards this end the introduction of an administrative division to which effect is already being given. It requires, indeed, no great acumen to find in and between the lines of this most recent Wolff telegram the beginning of the execution of the Belgian programme of annexation. This method is certainly a convenient one; in the course of the war they already annex what suits them in the East



and the West ; what is annexed disappears comfortably in the large bag, and then they reveal to all the world their empty hands, hypocritically exclaiming, " We are ready for peace ; it is the others who decline our offer of peace who are responsible for the continuation of the struggle."

It is also very interesting to compare this most recent incident reported by Wolff's telegram with the passage concerning the future of Belgium contained in the Zimmermann Note addressed to the United States on January 31st, 1917.<sup>1</sup> According to Zimmermann's Note, Germany in her noble self-restraint has no desire other than to live " in good neighbourly relations " with the kingdom of Belgium. According to the desire of the Committee of Flemings, and the assurances of Bethmann, however, " in concert with the Belgian Governor-General preparatory measures have already been taken to give to the Flemish people the possibility of independence which it would scarcely be able to gain by its own strength." Is this the preparation for the neighbourly relation in which it is hoped to live later with Belgium ? Is that a part of the peace to be concluded with Belgium whereby Herr Zimmermann means to regulate the later relations between Germany and Belgium, or is it merely a one-sided act of violence, a shamefaced annexation in the midst of war ? The only thing lacking is that they should place in the mouths of the Flemish marionettes, who had been summoned to Berlin expressly for this purpose, as was done in the case of the Polish Deputations, the wish that the moment might not be deferred when they might draw their sword by the side of Germany for their new Fatherland against their former oppressors. In order that they may create an æsthetically satisfying parallel between East and West, I recommend the gentlemen in Berlin to form, alongside the " voluntary " Polish legions in the East, " voluntary " Flemish regiments in the West for the holy struggle of liberation against their Walloon oppressors and their allies.

By this telegram from Wolff's agency dated March 4th, 1917, the German Government is nailed down with regard

<sup>1</sup> To which I return in the later chapter, " Bethmann, the Offerer of Peace."



to their annexationist programme, so far as concerns the Flemish parts of Belgium; all the recent reservations of the Chancellor, the mollifying statements of Zimmermann to the United States, are unmasked as acts of pretence and hypocrisy. It is now immovably established that the intrusion in Belgium's integrity and independence is no longer a programme of irresponsible annexationists and super-annexationists, but the resolved intention of the German Emperor and the German Government—an intention which has already begun to be transformed into action.

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And in saying this, it is necessary to bear in mind that the restricted annexationist plan with regard to Flemish territories is in itself the result of a compromise in authoritative circles, that the aims of the extreme annexationists who, led by the Crown Prince and the Tirpitz faction, have the greatest influence in the decisive quarter, reach much further, that is to say they extend to the annexation of the whole of Belgium. This is the express aim of the Pan-Germans, the Imperialists, the Militarists and their powerful retinue. Countless opinions in support of this fact could be cited from the newspaper and other literature on the subject. I will here only refer to one of the weightiest publications in the above sense, to a memorandum written by the man whose word doubtless carries most weight with the German Emperor. I refer to the Governor-General in Belgium, Freiherr von Bissing, who has meanwhile died. This memorandum, published in the periodical *Das Grössere Deutschland* (No. 20, of May 19th, 1917), deserves the most careful attention of all who wish to gain enlightenment regarding the currents and the views prevailing in the immediate environment of the Emperor. Herr von Bissing states quite undisguisedly :

In amplification of the views which I have already laid down in a memorandum I intend to speak only of the *dura necessitas*, or rather of the holy duty of keeping Belgium under our influence and our sphere of power, and of refraining from surrendering it in the interests of Germany's security. . . . We must at the present moment already be clear on this point, that a restored Belgium, whether it is declared to be a neutral country or not, will not only as a result of natural forces press over into the camp of our enemies, but will be drawn over by them. . . . No doubt can therefore exist



of the insufficiency of a frontier which is quite falsely described as the Meuse line, and which it is intended should be secured by the fortresses of Liège and Namur. It must rather be pushed back to the sea, in the interests of our naval power as well. . . .

If we do not take Belgium into our hands, and do not administer it in future and protect it by force of arms in our own interests, our trade and industry would lose the position acquired in Belgium and might perhaps never regain them. . . .

Against this there is only the weapon of the policy of power, which must also see to it that the population which is still hostile, gradually grows accustomed and submits to German rule, even if the process is only a gradual one.

Certainly *Vlamentum* is to be protected, but we must never lend our help to enable it to become completely independent. The Flemings, with their position of opposition towards the Walloons, will, as a Germanic race, become a force tending to strengthen German nationality. Belgium must be taken and kept as it now is and as it must be in the future also. . . . If we surrender a part of Belgium, or if we make a part of it, such as the territory of Flanders, independent as a Flemish State, we shall not merely create for ourselves considerable difficulties, but we shall rob ourselves of those considerable advantages and aids which the whole territory of Belgium alone, if under German administration, can assure us. . . . In the case of Belgium, the question, in fact, is not merely of minimum demands on military grounds, but of vital questions for the future of the nation and of the German Empire. . . . The conquest of Belgium is, in fact, forced upon us.

We shall have learned from such mistakes as have been made, and will never again embark on a weak policy of reconciliation in Belgium, such as has been so deleterious not only in Alsace-Lorraine but also in Poland (*sic*!).

It therefore only remains that we should avoid during the peace negotiations any discussion of the form of the connection which is to be established, and that we should enforce the right of conquest alone. . . . The question is of the well-being and the future of Germany; it is, however, also that of expiation for the war of annihilation directed against us (*sic*!). We must for years to come still maintain the present position of dictatorship. . . . Anyone who remains in the land must acknowledge that he belongs to Germany, and after a time that can be foreseen to Germanism. . . . The procedure of expropriation is absolutely necessary in order not to lead to such conditions as have existed in Alsace-Lorraine until the present day.

I am conscious that the demand to keep the whole of Belgium, to link it in one form or another to the German sphere of power, opens the prospect to a great aim which can be achieved only by a resolute spirit of sacrifice and the strongest skill in negotiation.

It is superfluous to offer any commentary on the above memorandum, on this exhibition of annexationist-militaristic



megalomania on the part of one of the most influential men in the confidence of the German Emperor, the man to whom was entrusted the arduous task of administering the occupied land. The purest thievish egotism, which with a cold snarl passes by all considerations of reason and humanity, and tramples down with cuirassier's boots all the rights of the man who has been robbed and attacked—the most brutal instincts of the conqueror emerge so nakedly and so perceptibly in the utterances of the Belgian Governor-General, that we can only be sincerely thankful to the editor of the weekly periodical for this publication.

This publication is also, in and for itself, very characteristic. As a rule, such compromising documents gain publicity only through an indiscretion. In this case the document in question is published by a paper which is edited by the deputy Baumeister and appropriates the ideas of the late Governor-General as an object of its propaganda. From this it will be seen with what assurance, with how great a feeling of support in authoritative quarters, the extremest annexationist efforts can be put forward. If Herr von Bethmann, as his present administrative measures appear to indicate, really and permanently means to restrict his annexation to Flemish territory only, it is certain that he only achieved this restriction to a partial annexation after the bitterest struggles against the wholesale annexationists of the school of Bissing in the environment of the Emperor.

The memorial of the late Governor-General is also of interest inasmuch as it charges the German and Prussian Government with a "weak policy of reconciliation" in the case of Alsace-Lorraine and Prussian Poland, that it contemplates a dictatorship lasting for a number of years, an expropriation law and other friendly measures of violence against the unfortunate Belgians who, whether Walloons or Flemings, refuse to submit to the Prussian sabre-rule. This General and Governor-General, this special confidant of his Majesty the German Emperor, reveals himself in his memorial, which was obviously intended for the Emperor, as the unadulterated type of a Prussian militaristic reactionary politician of power. To such a man was entrusted the most difficult and delicate



task that can be given to a statesman, the administration of a conquered and occupied country !

So matters stand at the German Imperial Court. Bissing's memorandum gives us a picture of the condition of Belgium as it would have been shaped in the event of a real German victory. As against this, Bethmann's administrative measures already represent a compromise with his opponents ; so long as arms or hunger do not decide otherwise, they represent the *minimum* of Germany's intentions with regard to the conquest of Belgium.

#### CONQUERORS AGAINST THEIR WILL.

The cardinal point in the reasons advanced for all the German plans of conquest, whatever form they may take, is, as I have already pointed out, the assertion that Germany was attacked, and must protect herself against future attacks :

We did not want war. . . . It was the enemy who chose war.  
 . . . We could have had what we wanted by peaceful labour.  
 . . . Whence do we derive the strength, despite all the difficulties arising from our isolation, to care for the population and to continue to defeat the superior number of our enemies and to conquer them ? Does anyone seriously believe that it is greed of territory ? . . . No, these are inventions of those who wanted the war.

So says the Chancellor. That is to say : It is true we are conquerors, but we are conquerors against our wills. We have become so by the guilt and the aggression of our enemies. It was defence that pressed the sword into our hands. And now we must make use of it to secure our future. It will be seen how one lie always produces others. The "shamefully attacked" lamb becomes—against its will—a ravening wolf, and the German people, with as much faith and unanimity as it displays in the trenches in offering its forehead to the enemy on all fronts, also joins in this transformation, it also takes its part in this new campaign against the truth in which unscrupulous Rulers, Ministers and Party-leaders have been its guides.

It is inevitable that the brutal egotistical motive of the future security of Germany should be still further embellished with the ideal altruistic motive of the liberation of



oppressed nationalities. This costs nothing and sounds well. Germany as liberator! What a lofty mission! The Prussian-German Government which for decades has inexorably waged a war of extinction against the speech, the thoughts and the manners of their Polish and Danish subjects and those in Alsace-Lorraine, which in the course of this struggle has proceeded to measures of violence such as even the despotic government of the Tsar never applied against the internal enemies of Russia, going as far as to the expropriation of acquired and inherited property—the Prussian-German Government which, while it compels the unfortunate inhabitants of its frontier provinces to give their lives for Germany, still makes no sign of giving them the same political and civil rights as their fellow-combatants in the trenches—this same paternal and benevolent Government, in which the Poles and Danes recently expressed their unchanged lack of confidence by their action in the Prussian House of Deputies in voting against the estimates, this most reactionary and retrograde of all Governments is to bring freedom to the oppressed nationalities in the East and the West; it is to free the Poles, the Lithuanians and the Letts and the inhabitants of the Baltic provinces from the Russian reaction, and to deliver the Flemings from forceful oppression and from Welsh influences! Do these nationalities then, in fact, want to be released from the peoples with whom they have hitherto been united? Do they want to be released by Prussia and Germany? Do the inhabitants of the Russian Baltic Provinces, of Polish Russia, of Belgian Flanders long for the Government of Prussian Land Councillors, Junkers from the East Elbe provinces, and Pan-German Generals? Read the appeals of the Poles, the Letts, the Lithuanians and the Flemings, who already decline to be liberated by such “liberators”! Leave to these alleged oppressed nationalities the free choice, the right to self-determination; summon them to a plebiscite, as was done even by the Napoleonic tyranny, and you will see whether or no they want to be freed by you. From you—yes! Through you—no! Evacuate the conquered territories, and the nations will feel released. Keep the conquered territories—they will feel in bondage and a new



Irredenta will arise against you, stronger and more fatal than that which you created for yourself in 1871, by the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. In the East and West the ferment will go on in your frontier provinces; the dissatisfied elements will endeavour to keep in touch with the neighbouring States, from which they have been forcibly sundered. Following the Prussian tradition, you will endeavour to suppress these national tendencies by measures of violence; new festering wounds will gnaw at the periphery of the national organism and will render your frontiers more insecure than they have ever been before.

That is the political and military "security" which you are seeking to gain with your annexations.

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To complete the tragi-comedy, the first thing that happens with the nationalities that are to be freed is what happens everywhere with them: they are ruined. Take the Balkan States; Bulgaria, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro went to war to liberate European Turkey from the Turkish yoke. Macedonia and Thrace were converted into a cemetery and a desolation, and as a first step towards "liberation" it was not merely Turkish soldiers, but also the men, women and children of the territories to be freed who were slain in their hundreds of thousands, their lands devastated and their towns and villages destroyed.

And now come Germany and Austria in Courland, Lithuania, Belgium, and Poland! Under the invasion and the domination of the "Liberator of *Vlamentum*" what has become of the prosperous, fruitful Belgium, peaceful and happy, wealthy in its industry and richly dowered with all the treasures of the soil? It is a place of misery, of hunger and of devastation—of hunger to such a degree that if foreign countries, and in particular America, had not come to the help of the hapless inhabitants by sending food supplies, a veritable famine would have broken out. First of all, unemployment is produced by plundering the factories, and starvation by devastation of the fields, and if the poor people are then without work and without food, the "shirkers" and the "hunger-marchers" are forcibly



dragged like modern slaves to Germany to render compulsory service which is to the advantage of the conqueror and the suppressor of their Fatherland.

Even the Chancellor cannot refrain from emphasising that the "remembrance of this war will long vibrate in the sorely afflicted country." This visitation falls as heavily on the Flemings as on the Walloons, on those who have been "welschified" equally with the Welseh. So here again we have the picture to be met everywhere in undertakings for the liberation of nations: Death and destruction as the first step on the path to liberation! In a certain sense indeed it is a principle worthy of the philosopher of Hohenfinow: Death as the liberator from all earthly tribulation!

I need not further describe how matters stand in Poland and in the Baltic territories which have been the scene of military operations. Half a century cannot make good the damage which the fury of war has brought upon the hapless lands over which it has swept. But that does not matter: Germany, "democratic" Germany, which in earlier and better times degraded herself to do hangman's duties for the Russian Reaction in a manner unparalleled by any other country, which in violation of all international law handed over Russian revolutionaries into the arms of Cossacks on the frontier, Germany will and must—this is now her historical task—liberate all the peoples from the Baltic Sea to the Volhynian marshes from Russian despotism, and it proceeds to accomplish this mission by first of all annihilating its *protégés* and razing their possessions to the ground.

Thus the "war of liberation" becomes not merely a war for the liberation of the German people from its enemies, but also for the liberation of enemy peoples from their oppressors. The old principle: *beneficia non obtruduntur* is perverted into its opposite in the case of those who are declared incapable of managing their own affairs. The benefits of German rule are forced upon them, just as children are brought up to a knowledge of the good, even against their will.

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Meanwhile, and this is the humorous element in the



matter, the Russian peoples themselves have taken in hand their liberation from the despotism of the Tsar, and have done so with conspicuous success. The Romanof has vanished, as if struck by lightning; the Hohenzollern, however, has, at any rate so far, remained spared from the lightning-stroke. To-day the German Emperor still continues to figure in the cast as "William the Liberator," the character in which he entered the war against Russia in the dog days of 1914. What, however, is now left to liberate in the erstwhile empire of the Tsars, where the people in a few stormy revolutionary days have risen from the lowest bondage to the highest democratic freedom? What does the Hohenzollern still want in the land of the holy Romanofs? Does it not strike even him that this presumptuous *rôle* of liberator, which was always a miserably invented pretence, has now become an absurdity which cannot fail to evoke the ridicule of the whole world? If, however, the struggle against "Tsarism," the creation for the future of guarantees against alleged desires of aggression, can no longer hold as a war-aim since Tsarism no longer exists, what then is left as the motive and the purpose of the intended gigantic annexations in the East?—lust of conquest, increase of power, and nothing else. And thus again the original aim of this Hohenzollern predatory war is revealed, even more distinctly than before, in its utter nakedness.

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The gigantic extensions of territory which are planned to take place in the East and the West are, of course, "in no way violations of foreign peoples." Of course not! Such brutality is utterly remote from the leading German statesmen. And even the Social Democrats, Ebert and Scheidemann, bear trusting testimony in the Chancellor's favour to the effect that he has no thought of violating other peoples. So might the stork say to the earthworm: "I am well disposed to you, I will do you no harm," and thereupon gobble him up. Germany's purpose is merely protection for herself and kindness to others. "Were we then Belgium's enemies before the war?" the Chancellor innocently asks his hearers in the Reichstag. Certainly



you were, and that not only from the moment when you demanded a passage through the neutral country on the evening of August 2nd under the threat to treat it as an enemy in the event of resistance, but from the moment when you conceived and elaborated the strategic plans for a passage. Even at that time the German crime had been committed, for which now vain attempts are made to find excuses on the ground that Belgium had in reality long ago surrendered her neutrality in favour of the Entente Powers. This lie requires no further refutation here; it is merely based, as is well known, on two conversations between English military attachés and Belgian officers, which in reality prove exactly the opposite of the German accusation.

It is not merely the attitude of Belgium in the whole of the past, but also her attitude immediately before and on the outbreak of the war—indeed her attitude during the war, her refusal to join in the London declaration as to peace of September, 1914—all these considerations prove that the King and the Government of Belgium never entertained the insane purpose of participating in a war against Germany, and of thereby making their neutrality, which was guaranteed by international law, dependent on the uncertain fate of arms.<sup>1</sup>

The German Government, which has published the Belgian Ambassadorial Reports, stultifies itself when it continues after this publication to maintain the legend that Belgium took the side of the Entente Powers. It would be unjust to deny that many reports of the Belgian Ambassadors do in fact show that these diplomats regarded the policy of the Entente Powers, not indeed as seeking war, but in many cases as involving a danger of war. If it is impossible to find anywhere in these reports the charge that the Governments of the Entente Powers were steering towards war, yet in many places reference is made to the dangers which the close diplomatic, and in part also military, cohesion of France, Russia and England might occasion for the peace of Europe. To the Belgian diplomats, as to every Belgian,

<sup>1</sup> See further on the point in *J'accuse*, page 213; *The Crime*, Vol. I, page 420; Waxweiler, *Belgium Neutral and Loyal*.



the rivalries of the Great Powers were of no importance, while the maintenance of the peace of Europe was all-important, and they repeatedly give expression to the apprehension that the close coherence of the Entente Powers might operate as a further irritant of the chauvinistic and militaristic circles of Pan-Germany, who were already in themselves bellicose in temperament, that it might strengthen their influence on those in authoritative places, and that it might thus occasion or accelerate the intentional provocation of the war on the side of Germany. The train of thought of the Belgian diplomatists may be compared with the warning notice which is affixed at the entrance of many properties: "Beware of the dog!" Those who enter are exhorted to observe the greatest prudence towards the dangerous four-footed guardian of the gateway. So the Belgian Ambassadors warned the French, the Russians and the English not to irritate imprudently the barking pack of dogs represented by the Prussian inciters to war, lest unexpectedly they should pass from barking to biting. This is the true meaning of the Belgian Ambassadorial reports, as I shall prove in detail in a later study.<sup>1</sup>

By its publication of ambassadorial reports, compiled with prejudice and interpreted with even greater prejudice, the German Government, however, seeks to pervert this true meaning into its opposite; it seeks to deduce from the warning to the wanderer the charge that *he* was the dangerous aggressor and that the biting dog was merely an innocent victim—in this once more resembling many keepers of dogs who are accustomed to meet the claims for compensation of passers-by who may be injured, on the plea that it was not the biter but the bitten who was responsible for the disaster.

However, let us assume for the moment that these ambassadorial reports really prove what the German Government seek to infer from them, that is to say, the war intentions of the Entente Powers; is it not then the case that this reduces to an absurdity the accusation which is at the same time brought against the small Belgium, imperilled to the utmost by any war between

<sup>1</sup> *The Crime*, separate volume, "Belgian Documents."



Great Powers? This accusation (which it is sought to justify by the military discussions between Belgian and English officers) is to the effect that the neutral country had surrendered herself to support this bellicose policy on the part of the Entente, and had even promised her military support for this purpose. The one publication of the German Government completely destroys the other. Had the Entente Powers really entertained bellicose intentions, it is inconceivable that Belgium should have given assistance and support to these intentions. How was this small and neutral country, to which even the most crazy German professor will hardly ascribe any intentions to war and conquest, a country which was only interested in the maintenance of peace—how was Belgium to bring herself to encourage by her support a policy which, in the opinion of her own Ambassadors, in itself involved a danger to peace? Either the Entente Powers pursued a war policy, in which case Belgium did not support them, or Belgium supported them, in which case they did not pursue a war policy. The two hypotheses cannot exist concurrently.

Since now in fact—as has been discussed in detail elsewhere<sup>1</sup>—discussions between Belgian and English officers did take place with a view to contingent military co-operation, there follows the twofold conclusion, which is indeed confirmed by the documents themselves :

(1) that the Entente Powers did not in fact prepare any attack on Germany, but merely a defence against Germany's attack ;

(2) that the leading circles in Belgium also believed only in the defensive and not in the aggressive intentions of the Entente Powers.

Even if no other proofs of Belgium's innocence existed, the German publications themselves would furnish a full demonstration of this innocence. Here again we find confirmation of the old experience that he who wants to prove too much proves nothing.

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Crime*, Vol. I, page 420.



This suffices to dispose of the consideration of guilt which is constantly being cited as the ground in law for the intended restriction of the political and economic independence of Belgium. It was never possible to put forward its alleged guilt as the ground for the attack on Belgium; since the attack was decided upon by the German General Staff long before the "guilt" was discovered, and it would have been carried out, even if Belgium (as it in fact did) had most scrupulously observed its neutrality. As a ground for the whole or the half-annexation of Belgium, the "guilt" of the Belgian Government cannot be cited, for the simple reasons that it does not exist, that there is nothing to prove it, but that it is on the contrary refuted by all the actions of this Government, and not least of all by the German publications themselves.

If one disregards the ridiculous pretext of the liberation of the Flemish people, there thus remains in this case also, in the plans of conquest towards the West as in those towards the East, no other "ground in law" than the principle that Power takes precedence of Right,—that is to say, the denial of all grounds of law. Germany needs security. This security demands the suppression of the independence of Belgium. That is the alpha and the omega of the wisdom of the German Government.

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#### SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND ANNEXATIONS.

The Chancellor's speech of April 5th, 1916, makes unambiguously clear to the whole world what those familiar with Prussian-German politics, its intellectual currents and its inner political conditions had long known, namely, that for the authoritative circles in Prussian Germany there is no other guarantee of a future peace than that Germany should enjoy a predominant position of power, a hegemony on the European Continent and at the same time a position of world-power resting on its European hegemony. The tendency of this war as a German imperialistic war of conquest is proved by the whole Pan-German, chauvinistic and militaristic literature of the last fifteen years, since the beginning of the



construction of the fleet, and it is sharply expressed in Bernhardt's brief words: "World Power or Downfall:" and it is this tendency which appears undisguisedly in the Chancellor's speech of April 5th, 1916, to everyone gifted with vision, although to the blindly credulous German people it is still presented under the euphemistic title of "security against future attacks." Briefly expressed, the meaning of the Chancellor's long speech is that we have never striven for World Power, for European hegemony, for the oppression of foreign peoples. Lovers of peace, we wanted to pursue our peaceful work; basefully and deceitfully they attacked us, they mean to annihilate us, they will again make us "impotent as in past centuries." We have successfully beaten back the attack and now—quite against our original intention—we are compelled to protect ourselves against future attacks by conquest of territory and "real guarantees" in the East and the West.

So says the Chancellor. And all the civil parties enthusiastically blew the same trumpet, and even the social patriots, at any rate at that time, did not offer a word of opposition to Bethmann's annexationist programme, and the reasons for its adoption. It was to be foreseen that men like Heine, David, Scheidemann, and their fellows, following the downward path on which they had entered when they accepted the lying hypothesis of the defence of the Fatherland, were bound in the end to finish up in the land of annexations and conquests. I predicted this with the utmost definiteness in December, 1915, on the occasion of the discussions which then took place in the Reichstag. In an article published by me entitled, "On the Downward Path," it was stated:—

They will and must in the end—such is the fatal logical continuation of the development followed up till now—take even the last step into the camp of the Government and the civil parties, the step leading to such extensions of territory as "are requisite for the political, military and economic security of Germany," to make use of the familiar formula once more repeated on this occasion by the Chancellor and the Civil parties. The first step, which placed German social democracy on the side of the defenders of the "threatened Fatherland" must necessarily in the nature of things lead to this last step into the camp of the annexationists. This development is



logical and inevitable. To assert that Germany had been basely and treacherously attacked by her enemies and at the same time to refuse the measures which appear necessary for her protection against further attacks would be illogical and contradictory. . . .

And thus the downward path on which they entered as a result of the "war of defence" will end in the land of annexations, of military, political and economic guarantees. The "honourable peace" which they recommend to the Chancellor and to which they already give their assent in anticipation will realise none of the demands which international socialism postulates for an enduring peace. It will not bring about an understanding among the nations; compulsory arbitration, armies of militia, disarmament, decisions of the people regarding war and peace, the abolition of secret diplomacy—it will not bring any of the things which the nations need, desire and demand. It will bring about an increase of the power of Germany and her allies, new conflicts, new sources of friction and new armaments worse and more pernicious than before, and a large share of the responsibility for this fatal development of Europe will devolve upon the majority of the German Social Democratic party which, blinded by the delusion of the defence of their country, denied their Socialist point of view, and step by step, half drawn in and half submerged, went down in the national stream.

The statement of the Social Democratic party leaders of June 23rd, 1915, contained the following extremely clear repudiation of any policy of conquest and annexation :

The party in the Reichstag and the party-leaders of German Social Democracy have always unanimously opposed the policy of conquest and annexation. We again raise the sharpest protest against all efforts and announcements in favour of the annexation of foreign territories and the violation of other nations, such as have been made public more particularly by the demands of the great economic associations and the speeches of leading civil politicians. The mere circulation of such efforts continually postpones more and more the peace which is ardently desired by the whole people. The people do not want any annexations ; the people want peace !

Now compare with this the speeches of Ebert and Scheidemann in the meetings of the Reichstag on April 5th and 6th, 1916. Comrade Ebert affected as much dullness of hearing as Comrade Landsberg in the meeting of the Reichstag of December 9th, 1915. He passed over in silence the conquests in the East of which the Chancellor had spoken in an entirely unambiguous manner, and it may be presumed that he would have thought even the plans of expropriation against Belgium as unworthy of mention,



had he not been forced to refer to it by an interruption of Liebknecht. As in December Landsberg got over Bethmann's plans of annexation, which were then still hinted at in modest form, with the consolatory thought that the Chancellor had only spoken of "pledges," which would be restored at a later date, so now Comrade Ebert set his mind at ease regarding the "real guarantees" of a military and economic nature which must be created in Belgium, regarding the "liberation" of the Flemish people, etc., with the sweet reflection :

What the Chancellor said regarding Belgium comes as a matter of course under the declaration which he gave, that we have no thought of violating other peoples.

A step further in conning his lesson was taken by Scheidemann, who described the liberation of Poland, which had been enslaved by Tsarism, as a joy for the whole of civilised humanity ; he represented the "protection of the Flemings in their speech and culture" as the *opposite* of a violation of Belgium ; he hailed with songs of jubilation the new Europe which the Chancellor means to raise in place of the old, and stated that every opponent of annexations and alterations of frontiers was "politically immature."

Thus our social patriots, in spite of the theoretical maintenance of their anti-annexationist standpoint, had now in practice happily arrived at the logical conclusion of their new political career. The famous policy of August 4th, 1914, had led them through the civil truce to Nationalism along the whole line, and finally to annexationism.<sup>1</sup>

What, however, had become of the principles opposed to

<sup>1</sup> After this prelude it need cause no wonder that Scheidemann and his comrades, in spite of the establishment of a Kingdom of Poland which is now completed (November, 1916), and the Germanisation of Flanders (February, 1917) still fail to see the war of conquest, but unremittently support the Government on the path of the "war of defence" by constant approval of new milliards of marks. It is interesting to observe how *Vorwärts* (new style) reconciles itself with the preparations for the annexation of Flanders under the curious title "Fraternalisation with the Flemings," just as it gets over the German measures of violence with the consolation that they are "of course only temporary." (See *Vorwärts* of March 4th, 1917.)



a policy of conquest and annexation, which they had announced with such fiery words on June 23rd, 1915, that is to say, a year after the outbreak of war (I will not speak of the period before the war)? What had then been merely the "demands of great industrial unions and the speeches of leading civil politicians" had meanwhile become the official programme of the German Government. By their speeches and votes on April 5th and 6th, 1916, as well as by their concurrence in further war credits, they gave this programme their sanction, and thus they not only threw overboard all the principles of international social democracy, but also their own programmatic statements of June 23rd, 1915. The reservations which they made at the same time against "foolish plans of conquest of politically irresponsible persons," against the "violation of other nations," etc., were of no practical value, and were only intended to dupe their electors and adherents.

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The party committee of the Social Democratic party at its meeting on July 21st, 1916, passed the following resolution :

Social democracy adheres to the repudiation on principle of all annexations, as well as any political or economic violation of a nation, no matter from what side; for these would only have as their consequence further wars in future. Social democracy states that the defence of our country, the security of our political integrity and economic freedom of development must be the only war-aim.

Even this resolution could in itself be hailed as a return to the traditional Socialistic principles. The only question was how far it would be followed in practice by the members of the party in the Reichstag. A year previously, leaders of the German Social Democratic party had also, as we have seen above, "unanimously opposed the policy of conquest and annexation." Nevertheless, leading members of the majority, inside and outside Parliament, such as Scheidemann, Ebert, Heine, Landsberg, and so on, had adopted an attitude towards the annexationist policy of the Chancellor which in part involved a shamefaced consent and in part an affected dullness of hearing. Others, more



daring, such as Haenisch, Lensch, Peus, and Südekum, had without circumlocution declared in favour of the necessity of far-reaching annexations. It was therefore necessary to accept the new statement of principle of the party with a certain measure of distrust, and to await the practical application of the principles announced.

It is interesting to observe how Herr Georg Bernhard, the former Social Democrat and the present political leader of the *Ullstein-Blätter*, at once showed to the comrades on the right wing the doorway of escape, by which at the appropriate moment they might escape from the prison-house of their anti-annexionist statement. The ex-Comrade Bernhard, along with the present day Comrade Scheidemann, "continues to occupy the point of view that this war has been forced upon us." He therefore quite logically puts forward the demand that we must "in any case protect ourselves against any repetition of attacks." How far this protection must reach is a point which we must, so Bernhard further deduces, leave in full confidence to the decision of the military experts :

We are convinced that Social Democracy also will not describe as annexations to which objection can be urged on principle, demands in this sense, which are put forward after careful consideration by the leaders of our army and our navy. . . . Nothing is further from our intention than land-robbery.

The social patriots ought to be extremely thankful to the ex-Comrade Bernhard for having so carefully prepared for them the grounds of excuse for their later greater or less degree of concurrence in annexations. Land-robbery—God forbid! That is in contradiction with our principles. But "security of our political integrity and economic freedom of development"—that is what we have expressly advanced as our war-aim, and if for the purpose of this security the acquisition of land or similar measures of violence are in the opinion of competent experts necessary, then these proposals fall entirely within the framework of our programmatic statement. I can already hear and see Comrades Scheidemann, Ebert and Landsberg executing this "egg-dance" to the piping of Herr Bernhard.



THE IMPERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE SOCIAL  
DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

On September 23rd, 1916, the Imperial Conference of the German Social Democratic Party by 251 votes against 5 (in arriving at this result the whole of the minority refrained from voting) accepted a resolution which, like all the previous decisions of the party, takes up the position of the defence of the country and justifies by reference to the "menaced Fatherland" the support extended to this imperialistic war of conquest :

This war still continues to be for Germany a war of defence. We are still called upon to avert the grave dangers which threaten our country, and which the labouring classes would not be the last to feel. We thank our brothers in the field who on all fronts have courageously withstood the attack of the enemy's superior forces. Social Democracy still adheres to the resolution to hold out in the defence of our country, until our opponents are ready for a peace which will guarantee the political independence, the territorial integrity and the economic freedom of development of Germany.

We most emphatically repudiate the reason adduced for a refusal to meet with us (on the part of the French Socialists) namely, that German Social Democracy, by supporting their country, had made themselves accomplices in an alleged "attack of Germany on Russia and France," since Germany in consequence of the Russian general mobilisation of July 31st, 1914, was most gravely imperilled.

I need not again explain that these sentences are from beginning to end a tissue of lies, which may not perhaps have been recognised as such by their authors two years ago, but which without doubt have to-day been brought to the knowledge of each one of them. I have sufficiently explained this in other passages of my books. The above statement is distinguished from earlier statements to the same effect, only by virtue of the fact (and it is for this reason that it calls for special remark) that the alleged menace to Germany in the end of July, 1914, which had formerly been explained by the invasion of Cossacks into East Prussia after the German declaration of war had taken place, that is to say, by a normal act of war brought about by the declaration of war, is now traced back to Russia's general mobilisation of July 31st, 1914. The



explanation is thus on this occasion more logical, inasmuch as it is based on an act of Russia before the German declaration of war; on grounds of fact it has, however, merely become more untenable. Elsewhere in my first and second books I have set out at length the story of the Russian general mobilisation of July 31st.<sup>1</sup> Here I shall only give a short *résumé* for the purpose of destroying once more the crucial foundation of the resolution of the Imperial Conference, namely the menace caused by the Russian mobilisation :

(1) A mobilisation is not an aggressive or a threatening action, but a military measure of security.

(2) On the threat of European conflicts, more especially in the Balkan conflicts of recent years, there are various precedents for mobilisation taking place without it being regarded as a *casus belli*, and without war ensuing.

(3) The Russian general mobilisation of the morning of July 31st was the answer to the Austrian general mobilisation which had taken place in the night from July 30th to July 31st.

(4) The Russian general mobilisation would not have taken place if the London Conference or Grey's proposal for an understanding of July 29th, or if the Tsar's proposal regarding the Hague Tribunal or Sazonof's formula of agreement of July 30th, had been accepted by Germany and Austria. Instead of this, Grey's Conference was declined, Grey's proposal for an understanding (Blue Book No. 88) as well as the Tsar's proposal remained unanswered, Sazonof's formula of agreement was rejected by Herr von Jagow as "inacceptable to Austria" (Orange Book No. 63). Sazonof's formula of July 30th contains the express offer on the part of Russia to stop all further military measures, provided only that Austria remove from her ultimatum the points which infringed the sovereign rights of Serbia. It was only the refusal of this Russian proposal for agreement, which took place on

<sup>1</sup> See *J'accuse*, page 158 *et seq.*, page 191 *et seq.*; *The Crime*, Vol. I, page 337 *et seq.*



July 30th, that led on the following day to the Russian general mobilisation.

(5) This Russian mobilisation, moreover, constituted no menace to Germany for this reason, that the Russian Government from the first to the last moment of the crisis accepted all the proposals for an understanding advanced from the other side, and in addition made a series of proposals of her own for arriving at an agreement, continuing to do so, indeed, after the mobilisation had taken place, on July 31st and August 1st (Orange Book No. 69 ; Blue Book Nos. 133, 139).

The facts so ascertained, which merely represent a *résumé* of my detailed accounts and explanations (in *J'accuse* and in the first volume of *The Crime*), are again sufficient to overthrow the insubstantial edifice of the war of defence which it is again sought to raise in the resolution referred to above.

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Just as untenable as the sentences regarding the origin of the war are the assertions advanced by the Imperial Conference on the subject of the war-aims of the opponents of Germany. Contrary to all the statements of the leading statesmen of the enemy Powers (to which I shall return later in detail) the majority of German Social Democracy still has the temerity to ascribe to these statesmen "threats of destruction and conquest" against Germany, and to lay upon them "the responsibility for the prolongation of the war."

It is not true that they wish to destroy or annihilate Germany.

It is not true that the enemies of Germany are opposed to a conclusion of peace, unless this their alleged intention is accomplished.

The expressed aim of Germany's enemies is to render Prussian-German militarism innocuous, and to create an order of law above the individual States which will remove the excrescences and the dangers of this militarism for the rest of the world, and make the return of such a world catastrophe impossible, even in the interests of Germany



herself. If the rulers of Germany declared to-day<sup>1</sup> that they were ready to evacuate the occupied territories in Belgium, France, Serbia, Montenegro and Russia, to grant appropriate compensation for devastated towns and territories, to make the destiny of certain disputed frontier territories dependent on the inhabitants' free right of self-determination—above all, however, if they expressed their readiness to submit to an organisation above the individual States which would make possible the settlement of international disputes by legal machinery, and thus at the same time lead to the diminution of the armaments of all the separate States, then the first and most important step to the possible initiation of peace negotiations would without doubt have been taken.

Instead of this, Germany still insists—despite the war-situation which ought forthwith to exclude such ambitions—on annexations to the East and the West in a more or less veiled form, and it is only with regard to the extent of these annexations that there is any difference of opinion in German countries. Nowhere in Germany has the idea of an organisation of Europe above the individual States been so much as seriously discussed in any authoritative quarter, whether by the rulers, the Governments, the party-leaders or by the influential Press,<sup>2</sup> although this thought is one which permeates, as their leading war-aim, all the oral and written utterances of the enemy statesmen. For the continuation of bloodshed, no one is therefore responsible apart from Germany, which is seeking to realise, not a peace of law, but a peace of violence, and is in this way in advance making any attempt at *rapprochement* impossible. If, as they maintain, German Social Democracy were seriously opposed to demands “which might give the war the character of a German war of conquest,” they ought first of all to present a united front against the German Government, and bluntly refuse

<sup>1</sup> This section on the “Imperial Conference” was written at the end of September, 1916, a point to be borne in mind in connection with the above discussion.

<sup>2</sup> I discuss in the following chapter the pacifist paroxysms of the Chancellor which appeared with meteoric suddenness on November 9th, 1916, to disappear immediately afterwards.



them all further war-credits. Since they do not adopt this course, despite all their declamations to the contrary, they continue to make themselves the partners in the guilt of this Imperialistic Government, the aiders and the encouragers of this Hohenzollern war of booty and of conquest.

#### THE RESOLUTION OF APRIL 19TH, 1917.<sup>1</sup>

The party committee and the leading members of the Social Democratic Party of Germany in a common sitting with the leading members in the Reichstag and in the Prussian House of Deputies held on April 19th, 1917, unanimously adopted a resolution which hails "with passionate sympathy the victory of the Russian Revolution" and in agreement with the Russian Council of Workmen and Soldiers demands a peace "without annexations and war-indemnities on the basis of a free national development of all peoples." The Social Democratic Party of Germany regards it as the "most important duty" of the Socialists of all countries :

To fight against the dreams of power of an ambitious chauvinism, to urge the Governments to a clear renunciation of any policy of conquest and to bring about as quickly as possible decisive peace negotiations on this basis. As a result of the conclusion of peace, no people must be crushed into a humiliating and insufferable position, but each must be given the possibility of assisting in making secure the permanent existence of the future peace of the world by voluntarily joining an organisation above the various States and by the recognition of compulsory arbitration.

It would be unjust not to recognise that this resolution speaks the language and breathes the spirit which in earlier and better times inspired the whole of German Social Democracy, before the war had confused men's minds and had effected a transvaluation of all values; in the essential fundamental points it acknowledges those views which the minority of the party, the present-day "Independent Social Democratic Party," have always advocated without variableness or shadow of turning. The most important

<sup>1</sup> The addition was written in May, 1917.



point in this resolution, however, is the fact that it was not merely intended to express ideas, but that the purpose was that an immediate practical consequence should be given to it in answer to and in connection with the programme as to war-aims announced by the Russian Workmen's and Soldiers' Council; it was meant that the word should be followed by action. In distinction from earlier Socialist congresses, the Socialist Peace Congress in Stockholm had for its object, not merely to proclaim theoretical principles, but, supported by the conspicuous power of the Socialist Workmen's Council in present-day Russia, to create a starting-point for peace negotiations between the Governments at war, or should these fail, directly between the enemy peoples.<sup>1</sup>

The extraordinary significance of the resolution of the German Social Democrats of April 19th was soon recognised by the Government and by the other parties in Germany. The consequence was that a storm of indignant opposition passed through almost the whole of the civil Press, that the Pan-Germans and their followers foamed with rage, that charges of high treason and treachery were hurled through the air and that those desires for annexations, which for a time had been somewhat damped, again asserted themselves with redoubled strength.

#### BETHMANN'S REFUSAL OF THE SOCIALIST PEACE PROGRAMME.

The further consequence of the increasingly violent conflict of opinion was that two opposed interpellations were addressed in the Reichstag, the one from the Conservative and the other from the Social Democratic side, both of which demanded that the Chancellor should assume a definite attitude towards the peace programme proclaimed by the Russian Workmen's Council and accepted by the German

<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile the Peace Congress suggested by the Dutch-Scandinavian Commission has not passed beyond the stage of separate preliminary discussions between the Commission and the Socialist groups of the various countries. The International Socialist Congress projected by the Russian Workmen's and Soldiers' Council has so far (July, 1917) not yet come into being.



Social Democracy ; that is to say, peace without annexations and indemnities. Herr von Bethmann, concerned, as always, to steer his way between Seylla and Charybdis, to save his bark from being wrecked either on the Socialist or the Pan-German rocks, hastened first of all in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* and then in his speech in the Reichstag of May 15th, to disclaim bluntly any solidarity with the Socialist peace ideals, without, however, for this reason inscribing the Pan-German ideals on his banner. He trimmed, as he had always done, and even at this extremely critical moment in his career, when he was placed against the wall by the two extreme groups, and challenged to declare himself plainly, he was again able to act on the prescription of old Nestroy who, well known as an incorrigible "neutralist" at his Viennese dining-table, whenever any dispute arose, was always ready with the stereotyped answer : "I don't say so, I don't say so ; it must not be said that old Nestroy said so and so."

The Chancellor declined the peace of renunciation of the Social Democrats as emphatically as the conqueror's peace of the Conservatives. At the same time, however, he gave it clearly to be understood—and his intention in this respect was still further underlined by the common statement of the majority of the civil parties—that it was only "*boundless*" plans of conquest, that is to say super-annexationism, with which he would have nothing to do, but that as before he continued to adhere to the moderate annexationist programme which he had already proclaimed. Herr von Bethmann expressly appealed to his earlier programmatic statements on the question of annexations :

What I have at any time been able to say with regard to our war-aims, I have said here openly in the Reichstag. It was general fundamental lines that I indicated and they could not be more than this. But they were plain enough to exclude identification with other programmes to which expression has been given. I have adhered to these fundamental lines unaltered.

He expressly declined a policy of "one-sided surrender of what our sons and brothers have gained with their blood," and described such a policy as the "basest ingratitude towards our warriors on the Aisne and before Arras." Indeed, he went so far as to protest that such a policy of renunciation "would permanently depress the standard of life of our



people affecting even the lowest workman, that it would be equivalent to a surrender of our Fatherland."

At the conclusion of his speech the Chancellor emphasised amidst the enthusiastic applause of the assembly that "on the matter of his war-aims he was in complete agreement with the supreme command of the army."

Can there be a sharper challenge to the Social Democratic peace programme than this speech of the leading German statesman? And this speech does not stand alone. It agrees with all the earlier speeches of the Chancellor on the question of war-aims, and indeed explicitly refers to them. What, however, gives it a specially sharp and a new note is the solemn emphasis laid on the agreement between the diplomatic and the strategic war-aims. We know to satiety from Prussian-German history, especially from the Bismarckian period, the eternal struggle which was waged at the Prussian Royal Court, and at the later German Imperial Court, between diplomatic and military considerations. I have elsewhere recalled many interesting phases of this chronic struggle. The most recent and the most fatal example of the subjection of diplomacy to strategy is found in the outbreak of war in the summer of 1914, in the precipitate ultimata, and above all the precipitate declaration of war against Russia which, on the demand of the impatient military, was immediately substituted for the German counter-mobilisation threatened in the Ultimatum. Like the outbreak of war, the conduct of the war by land and sea has also been a continual victory for strategy, a continual defeat for diplomacy, from the invasion of Belgium down to the proclamation of the unrestricted submarine warfare, down to the deliberate devastation of wide French territories, towns and villages "from strategic considerations."

According to the most recent statement of Herr von Bethmann, the same spectacle is now to be repeated on the conclusion of peace. It is the military party who will be called upon to determine the frontier-stones which are to protect the German Fatherland from the future attacks of ruthless enemies. The military will rehearse what is required for the future security of Germany. Herr von Bethmann will repeat it after them, he will say "Yea" and "Amen" to all that Hindenburg and his people tell him, unless mean-



while (a possibility by no means excluded) he has made way directly for the military rehearsers and dictators.<sup>1</sup>

The impartiality in the attitude of the Chancellor towards the war-aims of the Annexationists and the Internationalists is therefore apparent merely; it is only the extremes of annexationism of which he disapproves. He maintains unaltered the middle line of conquests to the East and the West which he had previously indicated, in agreement with the "block" of the civil parties. He still remains, as before, "Bethmann the Annexationist."

### THE BLINDNESS AND DEAFNESS OF THE SOCIAL PATRIOTS.

What then was the attitude of the German Social Patriots towards this distinct refusal of their interpellation on the subject of peace? It was more or less the same as towards the earlier annexationist speeches of the Chancellor. After Comrade Scheidemann in his introductory speech had taken the lead in attacking with a wealth of heavy artillery any idea of a conqueror's peace, no matter from what side it might come, and had even gone so far as to exclaim: "If England and France, as well as Russia, were to renounce conquests, whereas Germany were to refuse to give expression to such a renunciation, this fact would mean a revolution

<sup>1</sup> This prophecy has been realised more quickly than could have been expected, although not in its full scope, yet to a certain degree. In the middle of July, 1917, Herr von Bethmann gave up his place, not indeed to a General, but to a nominee of the Generals, the former Under-Secretary of State and Commissioner for Food, Dr. Michaelis. I devote a few observations later to this change in the Chancellorship. At this point I will merely emphasise that the new Chancellor with his formula as to war-aims: "If we make peace, the thing that we must first of all attain is that the frontiers of the German Empire should be made secure for all time," has taken up exactly the same ground as his predecessor, the point of view of the strategic guarantee of power. The events preceding the nomination of the new man, the co-operation of the Crown Prince, of Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff (apart from all secret influences), the failure to consult the presidents and the party leaders of the Reichstag, etc., cannot but awake the impression that the new Chancellor, even more than the old, will allow the peace conditions to be prescribed for him by the military authorities. It is significant that in the speech outlining his programme he has already emphasised the fact that "the German army and its leaders are in agreement with his statements."



in the country"—after the leader of the Social Patriots, obviously of set purpose and intention, had endeavoured by such a threat to exercise influence on the subsequent statements of the Chancellor, although without success, the deputy, Dr. David, came halting behind the speech of refusal delivered by the Chancellor in the same lame, blind, deaf and intentionally misunderstanding manner as had characterised Comrades Scheidemann, Ebert, Landsberg, etc., after the earlier annexationist speeches of the Chancellor :

The Chancellor gave no programmatic statement as to his attitude on the question of a peace without annexations and indemnities. On the other hand, I recognise that the statement of the Chancellor contained extremely valuable considerations. The most valuable I find in the statement which he made with regard to our desire for peace with Russia. In any case, the Chancellor did not put forward an annexationist programme, as the deputy Ledebour asserted. That is a misrepresentation which does not advance the cause of peace. He said nothing incompatible with our demands, but only expressed the view that this was not the moment for him to bind himself in any way.

Could it be believed that an intelligent man could dare so to transform a Government speech which had just been delivered, to falsify an annexationist programme into a non-annexationist one, to pervert an absolute refusal by making it appear that it was in no way incompatible with his own demands. Such people as these do not observe that they are being kicked until they have tumbled downstairs and broken their necks and legs. Only then does it dawn upon their consciousness that there is not a complete agreement of opinion. Tactical "considerations" is what this comrade calls the reasons which moved Herr von Bethmann against a statement in favour of a Socialist peace programme. Tactical considerations ! No, Herr Dr. David, the Chancellor has simply maintained his earlier annexationist programmes—in particular, therefore, those announced on December 9th, 1915, and April 5th, 1916.

He declared that a Socialist peace was base ingratitude towards the soldiers, and a surrender of the German Fatherland. Above all—and this you know as well as we do—he has already in great part realised his annexationist plans towards the West and the East. It is therefore impossible



for him to draw back. He has already effected an administrative separation of the part of Flanders which is to be annexed. He has founded the so-called Kingdom of Poland for the purpose of securing the German Eastern frontier "in adhesion to the German and Austrian Empire." He has already received deputations from Esthonians and Letts—exactly as happened with the Flemings—and he assured them of their liberation by Germany. It was not on grounds of tactics, but on grounds of fact, that he declined the anti-annexationist programme of the Social Democrats, because he had already in part carried out his programme in the other direction, and because he will carry out the remainder, should military events allow him to do so.

The summit of coolness in falsifying patent facts is reached by an article in the *Vorwärts* of May 17th, 1917, which, after much twisting and turning, finally arrives at the conclusion that the Chancellor in his speech of May 15th concurs in essential matters in the Scheidemann peace, even if unfortunately he has not yet drawn the last conclusions from this concurrence :

To this extent the course of Tuesday's debate is a symptom of the progressive clarification of public opinion in the German Empire. Herr von Graefe was fundamentally quite right when he expressed the view that this development in the last analysis amounted to the Scheidemann peace, so much detested by him.

The regrettable aspect of the matter is that this development at the present decisive moment is not yet completed, and that the Chancellor has done nothing to accelerate it.

This work of art in the sphere of interpretation reminds me of the celebrated etymological proof that the word fox comes from the Greek alopes : alopes, lopex, opex, pex, pox, fox. Herr Dr. David, the universal interpreter, had at once addressed himself to the task of transforming the Chancellor's kick into a kind of bashful caress, and had got as far as from alopes to opex. Two days later the further steps from opex to fox were made in the above article in *Vorwärts*, and behold, after two days of gloom there again reigned the clearest unanimity between Bethmann and Scheidemann. In spite of the Germanisation of Flanders, in spite of the Austro-Prussification of Poland, in spite of the proclamation of the



liberation of Courland and Livonia, our blind and deaf governmental Socialists still believed in the equation: Bethmann=Scheidemann; Scheidemann=Bethmann. After the example of the familiar refrain from "Mamsell Nitouche.":

Car Floridore est Célestin,  
Et Célestin est Floridore.

The best, however, is still to come. The *Internationale Korrespondenz* which, as is well known, is some degrees more governmentally Socialist than *Vorwärts*, being scarcely distinguishable from the gutter reptile Press, was not by a long way satisfied with the above somewhat shame-faced interpretation of the Bethmann peace as a Scheidemann peace. It was displeased that its journalistic brother should still leave open the possibility,

that Herr von Bethmann may be pursuing conquests resting on violence. Such an interpretation of the statements of the German Chancellor would be the most malicious perversion and misinterpretation of his words that could be conceived. Above all, it contradicts what the Social Democratic Party in the Reichstag gathered from the Chancellor's words. *Vorwärts* is on the downward path which leads into the camp of the minority.

Thus it must be clearly understood that only he who plainly and clearly represents the Chancellor as a resolute anti-annexationist, as an unconditional adherent of the Socialist peace-formula—"No annexations, no indemnities"—only one who is utterly imbecile and blind, whose senses of seeing, smelling, hearing, tasting and feeling are all irremediably atrophied, only one who cannot see the sun on a bright day or the stars in a clear night—only such a one is a true Socialist, only he is safe from the great excommunication of the Church of Scheidemann, Ebert, David and their consorts—the Church which can alone make blessed.

And yet, my honoured comrades, truly more to be lamented than condemned, all your desperate exhibitions of nimbleness and dexterity, all the stopping of your ears, all the binding of your eyes, will avail you nothing. You will after all be forced in the end to hear and to see and to show your true colours. The longer you postpone this confession, the more bitter and burdensome will it be for you. The facts speak



too plainly and will speak even more plainly in future. It will not be long until the German Governmental Socialists are once again and for the last time placed before the fatal question, whether they are to continue to remain Governmental Socialists or whether they are at last to draw a distinct line of separation between themselves and an Imperialistic Government.

The sins which they have committed in the past against the German people, and against all peoples, could not be again made good, even by turning away now from the paths of the Imperial policy of conquest. In his speech of May 15th, 1917 (which preceded the speech of the Chancellor), Scheidemann still maintains his standpoint on the question of guilt. Even yet he dares to represent as a mendacious invention of foreign countries the assertion that the German Emperor is responsible for the outbreak of the world-war; he still dares to transfer the guilt of the war to the Entente Powers, to state that the war is a "war of defence" to ward off an enemy plot against Germany's wealth and possessions. Even now he still dares to speak of England and France pursuing the handicraft of conquerors, while on Germany, the innocent Germany, there could at most fall the *suspicion* of being a "Robber People," as a result of the activities of the Pan-Germans.

After three years of lying the German Social Patriots are so firmly entangled on the question of guilt, that they can no longer free themselves from the fatal spell. On the question of war-aims, it appears as if they wanted to regain their freedom and place themselves once more on their own feet. The first preliminary condition to this new birth would, however, be that they should not only recognise the unbridgable gulf between their war-aims and those of Bethmann—this they have done long ago—but that they should also acknowledge it, a course which so far they have shunned. In place of their former deliberate short-sightedness must come wideness of vision; in place of their deliberate dullness must come acuteness of hearing. Above all, their former indecision must be replaced by a firm determination to withhold their further support from a Government which negatives the Socialist peace, and affirms (no matter in what restricted form) the peace of conquest, and to



refuse it all further war credits.<sup>1</sup> That would be the best passport with which the German Social Democrats could travel to a future congress of the International, that would be the key which, while it would not open the hearts and the consciences of the international comrades—for that the past weighs too heavily upon them—would at least open the door to a better future, to common work of the labouring classes of all countries in building an enduring peace among the nations.

### GERMANY AS THE "BRINGER OF FREEDOM."

The leaders of the former majority of the Social Democratic Party, who have now, after the foundation of the "Independent Social Democratic Party," become exclusive masters in the old house—are all at pains to justify as far as possible their attitude towards the German war policy, with the object of saving from the present shipwreck for later times some planks at least of their erstwhile proud platform. For these laudable purificatory efforts they have carried out a kind of division of labour among themselves. While Dr. David, as we have already seen,<sup>2</sup> has chosen the question of the origin of the war as his speciality, Comrades Ebert and Scheidemann are accustomed to make the question of war-aims the favourite topic of their discussions. The great warmth with which both these gentlemen intervened on behalf of the liberation of the Flemings, the Poles, the Balts and the Letts in the Spring sitting of the Reichstag (1916), appears meanwhile to have undergone an increasing coolness down to the autumn of 1916, with the progressive prolongation of the war. At any

<sup>1</sup> The old Social Democratic Party has not yet (July, 1917) fought its way to this decision. In spite of the tortuous statements of the new Chancellor in the matter of his war-aims, which leave the door open to all kinds of possibilities, in spite of the continuation of acts of violence on the East and West pointing to annexation, in spite of the rejection of any idea of Parliamentary Government on the part of all those in authoritative positions in Germany, the Social Democratic Party has nevertheless approved the most recent war credit of 750 million pounds—making in all 4,700 millions until the present day—and they have thus confirmed the practical worthlessness of all their anti-annexationist statements.

<sup>2</sup> See *The Crime*, Vol. I, page 462.



rate, there has meanwhile fallen from Scheidemann's lips the saying which has become famous : "What is German must remain German ; what is French, French ; what is Belgian, Belgian." Certainly, a very beautiful thought, and quite in accordance with Socialist principles. Meanwhile, "such is the lot of what is fair on earth,"<sup>1</sup> this saying also will disappear "under the beating of the horse's hoof." Like so many other beautiful principles of our Government-Socialists, it will be deadened by the thunder of the cannon, it will be ridden down by the regimental steeds. Belgium is to remain Belgian, but the Germanic Flemings, I thought, were to be freed from the Walloon yoke, in accordance with the desire which Scheidemann had previously expressed ! The beginning of this liberation was, indeed, hailed with joy by Scheidemann's organ *Vorwärts*, as a "fraternisation with the Flemings," as an action which would secure to this race "a cultural autonomy," and "be permanently advantageous to them." What does the Socialist leader think of the "solution of this discord in nature," according to which the Flemings are to remain Belgians, but are at the same time to be blessed by Germany with every kind of freedom and progress in culture—with freedom, which, be it observed, all the authoritative Flemings—as distinguished from the marionettes sent to Berlin—politely, but firmly, decline to receive from German hands ? What does the Socialist arithmetician think of this quadrature of the circle ? Presumably he is not yet entirely clear on this difficult question. I recommend as an example for its solution "the Republic of Baden with the blessed Grand Duke at its head."

The Eberts and the Scheidemanns who invoke Germany as a bringer of freedom to oppressed nationalities know as well as we do that no State in the world is less fitted to bring freedom to other peoples than Germany, led by reactionary and absolutist Prussia. They know that the German people itself has remained far behind all the other peoples of Europe in the development of democratic liberty ; even Russia has now outstripped them by half a century, and the young rising Balkan peoples themselves enjoy greater rights and freedom, and greater in-

<sup>1</sup> [Schiller],



fluence on their destiny than the ancient "culture-people" of the Germans.

In no European State—nor in either of the Americas nor in Japan—has a small class of land-barons, who are still completely prepossessed by reactionary and feudal views, so authoritative an influence on the administration and the Government of the country as is the case in Prussia, and through Prussia in Germany. The political predominance of Prussia in Germany, its personal union with the German Empire, in virtue of which the King of Prussia is the German Emperor, the Prussian Prime Minister is the German Imperial Chancellor—the inborn and trained ruthless brutality of the dominant caste of Prussia in the pursuit of their own interests at the cost of the other classes of the population, their mutual assistance and support by the bonds which arise from community of profession, from family and "corps" connections, from military comradeship—their dexterity in intrigue on the slippery soil of the Court, their skill in sapping and undermining even those in the highest places, and finally, to crown their sphere of influence, the Prussian Parliament resting on the three-class franchise, the Prussian Upper House built on an aristocratic basis of Junkerdom, without whose consent no law can be made, without whose good will no Government can exist—all these circumstances have brought it to pass that in the course of the last half century, since the creation of the German Empire, it is not Prussia that has been Germanised but Germany that has been Prussianised. Even if many of the German confederate States, so far as internal political matters are concerned, are governed on freer and more democratic principles than Prussia—as is well known the Prussian reaction is only surpassed by that of Mecklenburg—yet so far as Imperial affairs are concerned, in all the governments of the German confederate States as well as in the views of the confederate princes, it is the Prussian spirit that has gradually become supreme. Its effect has been contagious, like an epidemic disease. The Saxon Kings and Dukes, as well as the Bavarian Wittelsbachs, have taken over, along with the Prussian Pickelhaube, the brain contained in it. The speeches of King Ludwig of Bavaria, who certainly has



nothing particularly martial either in his external appearance or in his inner character, are in no way inferior to the Hohenzollern speeches of William II. in truculence and in military *élan*. As the Bavarian King, however, had first of all to raise himself by a laborious process of self-education to the Prussian level, and has had less practice than the German Emperor in making bellicose addresses, his speeches are much more compromising for the speaker and for Germany than the orations of the German Emperor himself. I would merely recall the famous speech of King Ludwig in June, 1915, on the occasion of the celebration of the Jubilee of the Bavarian Canal Union, in which the King was the first to come forward with the open proclamation of annexations, and at the same time produced the epoch-making revelation that it was France and Russia who declared war against us.

Lest he should be forgotten as a painstaking historical investigator, he delivered the following address on May 5th, 1917, to the Bavarian troops in Strassburg :

Our enemies did not want our offer of peace ; we will continue the fight to the victorious end. Even now we are still prepared for an honourable peace which will give us a guarantee that we shall not again be attacked by the whole world, as has happened on this occasion. Our enemies are not only unwilling to restore the frontiers as they existed before the war, but they want to wrest from us this fair town and this fair country ; but they will be dashed to pieces on the resistance of our brave troops, who are accustomed to victory (Wolff telegram of May 7th).

Comment is superfluous. This Wittelsbach, like all other kings, princes and dukes in Germany, is merely a weak Hohenzollern infusion. It is not Prussia that has been merged in Germany—that was the aim of the old German democracy, and would have been the salvation of Germany and of the world—but it is Germany that has been merged in Prussia, and this has been the undoing, not merely of German democracy, but also of the peace of the world.

And this Germany, so governed and so conducted, which refuses to its own people that freedom which other nations on a much lower level of civilisation have long



enjoyed—which is capable only of enforcing by a policy of repression and violence the blessings of German culture on the foreign nationalities within its sphere—it is this Germany that is now to deliver the Poles, the inhabitants of the Baltic provinces, the Lithuanians and the Letts from the Russian reaction (which, be it observed, has meanwhile been swept away without German assistance); it is now, we are told, to save the Flemings from Welsh influences; it is to appear on the left and the right, on the East and the West, as a “liberator,” while in its own land it has hitherto acted only as a slave-owner.

And it is Social Democrats who support such plans as these, who profess to give credence to such obvious deceptions! “We must decisively oppose any act of violation” emphatically exclaims Comrade Scheidemann. So then let us have no policy of violence, and also no policy of obtaining guarantees by annexation! Both would contradict Social Democratic principles. But a policy of *liberation—à la bonne heure!* That is quite a different story. The Social Patriots have no objection to that. From the abundant wealth of the Chancellor’s reasons for annexation, they select the motive of liberation, so that on the question of territorial conquests also they may by means of this plank find safety in the Government Island.

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Whether all the peoples to whom Germany promises freedom, whether even a single one will be liberated by Germany is, of course, a question which no one pauses to ask. We know that neither the Poles, nor the Lithuanians, nor the Letts, nor the Flemings are longing for German “freedom.” It would take us too far to enumerate here the great mass of evidence that exists in support of this view.

Only an ignoramus or a liar would venture to assert that the Flemings, who have already been marked out as future members of the German Empire by the administrative separation, have ever entertained the remotest idea of breaking away from their Walloon countrymen. The representations made to the Berlin Government by the so-called Flemish “active” party (beginning of March,



1917) have been most emphatically repudiated by the leading men among the Flemish Belgians. Immediately after the reception by the German Chancellor of the deputation of the "Council for Flanders," a Belgian, writing in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (March 13th, 1917), described the persons who formed the deputation as "a few immature, ambitious people without a mandate and without authority," and added :

All the leaders of the Flemish party, all those who in Flanders have any kind of authority either by virtue of their ability or of their political and social position, have clearly and openly, in a solemn statement, disowned this artificial movement, which is attributable to foreign influence. They have clearly and openly expressed themselves against any intervention in Belgian affairs by the power in possession. All have emphasised their loyalty to the Government of King Albert, and some among them, like Professor Paul Fredericq of the University of Ghent, and Verhaegen, the Deputy in the House, have paid the penalty for the open acknowledgment of their patriotism by a more or less lengthy residence in German prisons.

The writer of the article makes it clear that all the demands of the Flemings had been granted one after the other long before the war ; the language of administration and of law was Flemish ; instruction in the primary and secondary schools was also imparted in Flemish. It was only the University question that awaited a solution. The Flemings would never have complained of the *régime* existing before the war, especially as they possessed a majority in Parliament. The writer correctly points out that the plans pursued by Germany in effecting the administrative separation are only too transparent. The movement for separation is

to-day regarded by all Belgian patriots as a crime against a Fatherland which is one and indivisible. There can be no doubt as to the answer which will be given by those "across the Yser" to those who make themselves the spokesmen of this movement. The answer will be given with the rifle. You may believe one who has just visited the Belgian front and who was there in a position to ascertain that in the common struggle for a common Fatherland, the old controversies between Flemings and Walloons have been completely forgotten.

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That the Russian Poles had no reason to be satisfied with the Russian Government is a well-known fact, but



the Prussian Poles, in recent decades at any rate, were even more dissatisfied with the Prussian Government. After the liberation of the Russian people, after the solemn guarantee of autonomy extended to all nationalities belonging to the Russian Republic, after the promise given by the Provisional Government to establish a new and undivided Polish State with a republican form of government, it is so obvious on what side the free popular will of the Poles would declare itself to-day—the side of the autocratic Central Powers or of democratic Russia—that any further discussion of the question appears superfluous. But even at an earlier date, when Tsarism was still intact, there can be no doubt that a Polish plebiscite would never have resulted in favour of the country which had beaten all records in the persecution and suppression of the Poles.

Even the policy pursued in times of peace by Prussia towards the Polish "subjects"—which even during the war has so far undergone no radical change<sup>1</sup>—would have deprived the Russian Poles of any desire to become a part of Prussia. The Prussian conquest and occupation of Poland have carried this further; they have increased the aversion from Prussia entertained by the great majority of the population to an implacable hatred. The principles, on which the German military occupation has governed the country have been marked by such a degree of ruthless injustice and harshness that any sympathy for the German "liberator," even if it had ever existed, must have been extirpated root and branch. The Russian Poles, both before and after the proclamation of the so-called Kingdom of Poland, were no better treated by the Prussian military authorities than were the unfortunate Belgians. The only

<sup>1</sup> I have already referred in an earlier passage to the abolition of the expropriation paragraphs which has at last taken place (May, 1917). All the remaining anti-Polish laws remain unaltered. The Prussian Government has not even decided on the introduction of the Polish language in school instruction in Polish-speaking areas. It is only in the case of religious instruction that they have allowed certain exceptions to which strict conditions are attached—from which it would appear that the Prussian bureaucracy considers that an understanding of religious doctrine is of more importance than all other branches of learning.



difference is that the reports from the latter were able to penetrate to foreign enemy countries and were thus able to reach the world, whereas the miserable conditions of the former remain concealed within the frontiers of their devastated country and only accidentally become known by oral accounts.

Such oral reports have reached me from absolutely reliable people, natives of Kalisch—reports which more than justify the designation of “Huns” which has become the customary appellation for the German soldiery in Entente countries. The defenceless town, which was immediately given up and abandoned by the Russian troops on the outbreak of war, was occupied by German troops in the first days of the war, and on the orders of the Commander-in-Chief the greater part was burned to ashes. Many citizens were shot, and a large number of prominent persons were led away as hostages, under conditions of unspeakable torture and hardship, under threats and abuse. These hostages, who had been made prisoners without even being allowed to take farewell of their families, whose homes and manufactories had been destroyed by deliberate incendiarism ordered by the authorities, who were treated worse than the most hardened criminals, were discharged after some weeks in Posen, without any means of support, just as they were. On this occasion the General in command, Herr von Bernhardt—the celebrated Bernhardt—addressed them as follows: “You are discharged, because the suspicion that shots were fired in Kalisch on German troops has been shown to be unfounded.” This suspicion led to the burning of the town, the slaughter of many inhabitants, the martyrdom of the hostages—exactly as in Belgium. The suspicion was later shown to be unfounded—but what did it matter? It was the law of war; it was one of the necessities of war! So much the worse for those who suffered! What did they mean by being citizens in the enemy’s country?

This was the opening of the German mission of liberation in Russian Poland.

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Every child knows that the population of the Baltic provinces who are also to be liberated are neither German,



nor do they feel German nor wish to be German. Here the lie of the liberation of the nations is almost more obvious than in the case of the other nationalities whose thirst for freedom the " princely " German princes intend to sate. The only people in the Russian Baltic provinces who are either wholly or partly of Germanic blood are the Baltic barons and large landed proprietors. It is, however, these very people who are unconditionally anti-German in sentiment ; they gravitate in every respect towards Russia, where from time immemorial they have occupied the most important positions in the Government, in the administration and in the army, where they have enjoyed great influence at the Court and in Society. The many German names which meet us in the high bureaucracy and among the Generals of Russia are nearly all of Baltic origin. The material and social interests of this dominant Baltic caste, who are connected to a certain extent with our East Elbe Junkerdom not merely by geographical proximity but also by spiritual kinship, are as intimately connected with the governing *régime* in Russia as are the interests of our Prussian Junkers with our Prussian *régime*. In its political and social views the territorial nobility of the Baltic is just as feudal and as much tainted with Junkerdom as its Prussian pendant in the province of East Elbe. It does not, however, consider this aspect of the case, and it would offer a most stubborn resistance if it were called upon to exchange the Russian *régime*, in whose lap it has been well tended and has done good business, for the *régime* of Prussia.

If even this Germanic upper stratum has no desire to have anything to do with Germany, it is easy to imagine how matters stand in the case of the middle and lower classes of society, who are anything but Germanic. It is a familiar fact that the Revolution of 1905 raged with particular violence in the Russian Baltic provinces. In very many cases the possessions of Baltic barons were laid waste and their castles committed to the flames. It was a kind of peasant-war against feudal oppression, which in accordance with the law and custom prevalent in these areas still keeps the rural labouring population in a kind of virtual relationship of bondage to the great land-



owners. It was, however, at the same time a struggle of national tendencies against an alien dominant stratum engrafted and superimposed on the popular elements. Even the Lithuanians of Russia do not feel themselves at one with the Lithuanians of East Prussia; the former are Catholics, the latter are Protestants. How much more unlikely is it to expect from the Esthonians, the Letts or the Finns any inclination to Germany or any longing for liberation. More than ever does this hold good after the great act of liberation of the Russian Revolution. No! that is all sheer nonsense, the invention of the conqueror and the devourer of land, who protesting, strikes his hand upon his breast, and cries: "Do not believe that lust of conquest and greed of land are my governing motives. I only wish the weal of those whom I stuff into my belly." Even the "Comrades" who lend their assistance in serving the meal to the insatiable Moloch know exactly what it is all about. But they clutch greedily at the formula of liberation, because in it they find anchorage in the shipwreck of all their convictions and principles.

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When, as we have seen above, the Social Democrats of the old party in the later course of events apparently "moulted," and transformed their former concurrence in the acts of "liberation" in the West and the East into the opposing formula, "No annexations, no matter in what form and under what pretext," their present denial of their former policy in the matter of war-aims in no way removes the grave responsibility which they have taken upon themselves by their former attitude. They have in fact supported in practice the policy of annexation, so long as it was possible for them to believe that this policy could be successful. Their present renunciation is in no way one of principle, but is merely an act of opportunism, conditioned by the course of the war. But even now, when they have apparently adopted the peace formula of the Russian revolution, they do not dare to draw the obvious conclusion, that of abandoning the "civil truce" and refusing further war-credits. Not until they have drawn this conclusion will it be proved that their change



from their former policy in the matter of war-aims is complete, that their return to Socialist principles, in this respect at least, is sincere. I do not regard it as entirely impossible that, before these lines appear in print, the increasing realisation of the impossibility of achieving a German peace in the face of a world-coalition of hostile Powers will have at last led even the old Social Democratic Party to renounce the Government and to refuse further war-credits. So much the better for the party! So much the better for Germany! But this will not suffice to obliterate the sins of the past. The tardy renunciation of the "liberation" of the Flemings, the Poles, the Lithuanians and the Letts—at the moment when this liberation has become no longer practicable—is no merit in the German social patriots, but merely a confirmation and an acknowledgment of their earlier mistake.

In the *exposé* given to the Dutch-Scandinavian Commission in Stockholm the leaders of the party seek to induce the belief that they had from the beginning of the war occupied the same ground as the peace programme of the Russian Revolution. As my historical *résumé* shows, this assertion is only correct in so far as the party as a whole had expressed itself as against annexations on principle. But it conceals the fact that the most eminent leaders of the party—and still more the *dii minorum gentium*—had acknowledged more or less annexationist views in their individual utterances. What is the significance of a party resolution which emphatically condemns all conquest, when thereafter comrades Scheidemann, Ebert, Lersch, Haenisch and others get up and express their desire, not indeed to "conquer" Russia, Poland, and Belgium, but to "free" them from their former rulers. If one wishes to gain a correct view of the war-aims policy of the party during the first years of the war, the *exposé* as to the attitude of the party as a whole would have to be set against an *exposé* of the individual attitude of the party leaders. This picture would show that the resolutions declaring the principles of the party were merely show and deceit, merely intended to mislead their followers and electors, and that in reality the social patriotic majority of the old party kept company with the Government on the path



of annexation so long as they regarded the attainment of this end as possible, and that they did not effect a change of front—which until now has remained merely platonic—until this aim was definitely shown to be unattainable. The hypocritically veiled concurrence in Bethmann's annexationist aims, so long as these appeared attainable, the fact that for years they gave their support to this policy of conquest by continued approvals of war-credits will remain an indelible item of guilt in the account of the old Social Democratic Party. This item of guilt remains, even if in future the party should decide to draw all the practical conclusions from its repudiation of annexations which had hitherto been purely theoretical. To make clear the joint responsibility of the majority socialists for the German Government's policy as to war-aims—before history, before the German people and before the members of the International—is the purpose of the foregoing summary of the decisive facts.

#### THE WAR-AIMS OF GERMANY'S OPPONENTS.

On April 5th, 1916, Herr von Bethmann described the war-aims of Germany's opponents in the following sentences, the substance of which, allowing for certain shades in the form of expression, recurs in all the speeches of the Chancellor :

The complete and final destruction of the military power of Prussia is for Mr. Asquith the preliminary condition of all peace negotiations. . . .

It is this united and free Germany which our enemies wish to annihilate. Germany is again to become powerless as in past centuries, exposed to her neighbour's lust for power—the whipping-boy of Europe, for ever fettered, even after the war, in the development of her economic capabilities. That is what our enemies understand by the destruction of the military power of Prussia.

We are to be destroyed first in a military and then in an economic sense. Everywhere there is evidence of a brutal rage for destruction and annihilation, and the presumptuous desire to cripple a people of 70 million souls. . . .

Of all the belligerent Powers Germany is the only one which is threatened by her enemies, out of the mouths of their statesmen, with the annihilation and dismemberment of the Empire, the



destruction of the essence of our military and economic power. The driving forces which before the war brought together the coalition against us—lust of conquest, lust of revenge, and jealousy of the competitor in the world's markets—have, despite all their defeats, remained during the war potent factors in determining the actions of the Governments of our enemies. . . .

It was not we who wanted the war ; it was not we who threatened another nation with the annihilation of its existence, the destruction of its national being.

What are the facts with regard to these accusations of the Chancellor ? Are they in truth the war-aims of Germany's opponents ? Or what other aims are they pursuing ?

I will prove that no responsible statesman in the Entente Powers has ever stated or even hinted that the aim of the war was to crush Germany's power, to suppress her unity and freedom, to make Germany powerless "as in past centuries," to annihilate her in a military and economic sense or that they were pursuing any other similar object.<sup>1</sup>

#### ASQUITH.

It is in the first place interesting to observe how the Chancellor in the heat of the fight grows more and more passionate, how in each sentence he depicts the war-aims of his enemies as more and more far-reaching, as more and more terrifying. He begins by attributing to Mr. Asquith the intention of destroying the military power of Prussia, and ends by saying that the statesmen of the Entente Powers mean to annihilate and dismember the German

<sup>1</sup> The following review of the war-aims put in the fore-front by Germany's enemies (which in the nature of things must be restricted to a short selection from the superabundant material available) was written long before the beginning of the real discussions about peace which were initiated by the German offer of December 12th, 1916 ; and also long before the " pacifist " speech of the Chancellor of November 9th, 1916. This speech and these discussions are treated in later chapters of this section ; I should, however, like merely to observe here that the account of the real war-aims of the Entente Powers given above is in no way rendered invalid by later events. On the contrary, the earlier statements of Asquith, Grey, Viviani, Briand, etc., in the first two years of the war furnish so to speak the guiding thread to a better understanding of their later attitude towards Germany's so-called peace offer.



Empire, as if their purpose were to level the surface of the soil. If he had only spoken for half an hour longer he could have been counted upon to ascribe to Grey, Asquith, Poincaré and Sazonof the complete extirpation of 70 million Germans as the object of the struggle.

What in reality are the opponents of Germany striving to attain ?

Let us in the first place confine ourselves to the utterances of Mr. Asquith, whom Herr von Bethmann seeks to represent as more particularly the villain of the piece. In his speech at Dublin on September 25th, 1914, that is to say, scarcely eight weeks after the beginning of the war, Asquith spoke as follows regarding the war-aims of the Allies :

I should like, beyond this inquiry into causes and motives, to ask your attention and that of my fellow-countrymen to the end which, in this war, we ought to keep in view. Forty-four years ago, at the time of the war of 1870, Mr. Gladstone used these words. He said : " The greatest triumph of our time will be the enthronement of the idea of public right as the governing idea of European politics." Nearly 50 years have passed. Little progress, it seems, has as yet been made towards that great and beneficent change, but it seems to me to be now at this moment as good a definition as we can have of our European policy. The idea of public right—what does it mean when translated into concrete terms ? It means first and foremost, the clearing of the ground by the definite repudiation of militarism as the governing factor in the relation of States and of the future moulding of the European world. It means, next, that room must be found and kept for the independent existence and the free development of the smaller nationalities, each with a corporate consciousness of its own. . . . And it means finally, or it ought to mean, perhaps by a slow and gradual process, the substitution for force, for the clash of competing ambitions, for groupings and alliances and a precarious equipoise, of a real European partnership based on the recognition of equal rights, and established and enforced by a common will. A year ago that would have sounded like a Utopian idea. It is probably one that may not, or will not, be realised either to-day or to-morrow, but if and when this war is decided in favour of the Allies it will at once come within the range, and before long within the grasp, of European statesmanship.

In his speech at Cardiff on October 2nd, 1914, Asquith said :

In this case, so far as we are concerned, ambition and aggression play no part. What do we want ? What do we aim at ? What have we to gain ?



We are a great, world-wide, peace-loving partnership. By the wisdom and the courage of our forefathers, by great deeds of heroism and adventure on land and sea, by the insight and corporate sagacity, the tried and tested experience of many generations, we have built up a dominion which is buttressed by the two pillars of Liberty and Law. We are not vain enough or foolish enough to think that in the course of a long process there have not been blunders, or worse than blunders, and that to-day our Dominion does not fall short of what in our ideals it might and it ought and, we believe, it is destined to be. But such as we have received it, and such as we hope to leave it, with it we are content.

We do not covet any people's territory. We have no desire to impose our rule upon alien populations. The British Empire is enough for us. . . . If, as I have said, we have no desire to add to our Imperial burdens, either in area or in responsibility, it is equally true that in entering this war we had no ill will to gratify, nor wrongs of our own to avenge. In regard to Germany in particular, our policy—repeatedly stated in Parliament, resolutely pursued year after year both in London and in Berlin—our policy has been to remove one by one the outstanding causes of possible friction, and so to establish a firm basis for cordial relations in the days to come.

Asquith then went on to speak of the negotiations for an understanding in 1912,<sup>1</sup> for the failure of which Germany alone was responsible, of the co-operation with Germany during the Balkan crisis, of the success then attending the common intervention on behalf of peace, which on this occasion also would have led to the goal, if Germany had desired the maintenance of peace, and finally he contrasted the new German theories of force and power sprung from feudalism and militarism with the views of modern democracy, which seeks to import the principles of right and equality into international life also :

The new school of German philosophy has been teaching for a generation past that in the affairs of nations there is no code of ethics. According to their doctrine force and nothing but force is the test and the measure of right. As the events which are going on before our eyes have made it plain, they have succeeded only too well in indoctrinating with their creed—I will not say the people of Germany,—like Burke, I will not attempt to draw up an indictment against a nation—I will not say the people of Germany, but those who control and execute German policy.

But it is one of those products of German genius which, whether

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See *J'accuse*, p. 90, *et seq.*, and *The Crime*, Vol. II., p. 235.



or not it was intended exclusively for home consumption, has not, I am happy to say, found a market abroad, and certainly not within the boundaries of the British Empire. We still believe here, old-fashioned people as we are, in the sanctity of treaties, that the weak have rights and that the strong have duties, that small nationalities have every bit as good a title as large ones to life and independence, and that freedom for its own sake is as well worth fighting for to-day as it ever was in the past. And we look forward at the end of this war to a Europe in which these great simple and venerable truths will be recognised and safeguarded for ever against the recrudescence of the era of blood and iron. Stated in a few words that is the reason for our united front.

All these earlier utterances of the English Prime Minister are summarised in the most precise form in his answer to the speech delivered by the German Chancellor in the Reichstag on April 5th, 1916. This answer was given by Asquith in proposing the toast of the President of the French Republic at a banquet in honour of the French senators and deputies on April 10th, 1916. In this speech he spoke as follows regarding the war-aims of the Entente Powers :

Great Britain, and France also, entered the war not to strangle Germany, not to wipe her off the map of Europe, not to destroy or mutilate her national life, certainly not to interfere with (to use the Chancellor's language) "the free exercise of her peaceful endeavours." We were driven, both here and in France to take up arms in order to prevent Germany (which for this purpose means Prussia) from establishing a position of military menace and dominance over her neighbours. . . . The purpose of the Allies in the war is to defeat that attempt, and thereby pave the way for an international system, which will secure the principle of equal rights for all civilised States. As a result of the war we intend to establish the principle that international problems must be handled by free negotiation on equal terms between free peoples, and that this settlement shall no longer be hampered and swayed by the overmastering dictation of a Government controlled by a military caste. That is what I mean by the destruction of the military domination of Prussia—nothing more, but nothing less.

Going into the question of Bethmann's demands for annexation, Asquith stated that the Allied Powers were the protectors of small independent States, and above all were determined "to see once again the old Belgium. She must not be allowed to suffer permanently from the wanton and wicked invasion of her freedom, and that



which has been broken down must be repaired and restored."

These statements of the English Prime Minister are entirely unambiguous, and they are confirmed by all his earlier utterances on the war-aims of the Entente Powers, as well as by the whole attitude of the Liberal Government since 1905. The English Press of all political shades has given expression to its concurrence in the utterances of the leading statesman. So also has the Press in the other countries of the Quadruple Alliance. Even an Italian paper which is so nationalist in sentiment as the *Corriere della Sera*, in discussing Asquith's speech, confirms the war-aims of the Quadruple Alliance as proclaimed by him, and states that there is no intention

to annihilate Germany or deprive it of the right to its future. . . . The Quadruple Alliance is fighting for the principle of equality of civilised nations and for international understanding. Even the German Chancellor has spoken of a new Europe and of a sure enduring peace. . . . Germany thinks that this end is to be realised in subjecting various nations to its control, whereas the Quadruple Alliance leaves to every nation the right of self-determination. The peace of Germany continues to be contrasted with the European peace, the realisation of which would serve the cause of the advancement of civilisation.

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On the second anniversary of England's declaration of war against Germany, Asquith delivered a great political speech to a vast assembly in the Queen's Hall, in which he again defined the war-aims of the Allies in exactly the same way as in his former speeches :

By the victory of the Allies the enthronement of public right here in Europe will pass from the domain of ideals and of aspirations into that of concrete and achieved realities. What does public right mean ? I will tell you what I understand it to mean—an equal level of opportunity and of independence as between small States and great States, as between the weak and the strong ; safeguards resting upon the common will of Europe and, I hope, not of Europe alone, against aggression, against international covetousness and bad faith, against the wanton recourse in case of dispute to the use of force and the disturbance of peace ; finally, as the result of it all, a great partnership of nations federated together in the joint pursuit of a freer and fuller life for countless millions who by their efforts



and their sacrifice, generation after generation, maintain the progress and enrich the inheritance of humanity.

#### VANDERVELDE.

About the same time, on the occasion of the memorial celebration in honour of Jaurès in the Trocadero at Paris, Vandervelde, the Belgian Minister, delivered an epoch-making speech in which he rightly judged the attitude of the socialist parties in the various belligerent countries by reference to the criterion: Which country is waging a defensive, and which an aggressive war? It was the duty of the Allies, and in particular of the socialist parties in their countries, to see that their war of defence did not develop into a war of conquest, either in a territorial or in an economic sense. The Belgian Minister made express reference to the war-aims as Asquith had defined them in his political speeches from the beginning of the War:

The coming peace must in the fullest measure guarantee to all the right of the nations to determine their own destiny, and it must not leave Europe separated into two groups of enemies by prolonging the political into an economic war. In a word, this war of defence must in no way be transformed by annexations and measures of retaliation into a war of conquest. It will therefore be sufficient that the nations of the Quadruple Alliance remain true to the principles laid down by Asquith: Justice and restoration for Belgium, liberation for France, no more irredentism in Europe. (Wolff's Telegraph Bureau, Bern, July 31st, 1916.)

In their capacity as members of the International Socialist Bureau and of the General Council of the Belgian Labour Party, Emile Vandervelde and Louis de Brouckère transmitted to the Dutch-Scandinavian Commission at Stockholm on June 30th, 1917, a memorandum which in many respects claims special interest. The responsibility for the outbreak of the war, the judgment passed on the attitude assumed by the Socialists towards their Governments (from the point of view of the war of defence and aggression, which I also have put forward as being alone decisive), Germany's offence against Belgium, the war-aims of the Entente Powers and a criticism of these aims from the Socialist standpoint, the influence of the Russian Revolution and of the accession of America on these



war-aims—all these points are so luminously, briefly and cogently explained in the document in question, that among all the arraignments of the originators of this war it possesses pre-eminent significance.

In this place I must be content to reproduce a few sentences which again give the lie to the leading German statesman and his adherents when they say that their opponents in the war intend to crush and annihilate the German people. We read in Vandervelde's *exposé* :

It was international capitalistic Imperialism that created the economic and political conditions which made the catastrophe possible. But it was the reactionary militaristic Imperialism of the Central Powers that exploited these conditions for the purpose of maintaining their hegemony, and, in the deliberate and intentional pursuit of a long matured project, provoked this war under the most miserable pretexes and for the most contemptible ends. It was able to carry out its plans, thanks to a passivity of the people which would have been impossible in any other country, in France as well as in England, and even in the Russia of 1914 where the forces of democracy were already combining against the Tsar and would have revolted against such an unprecedented outrage. . . .

Do not let it be said that the destruction of German Imperialism is a matter which concerns the Germans alone. This would hold good so long as this Imperialism made its influence felt only at home. To-day it has stepped beyond its frontiers and is oppressing us. We mean to break the power of our tyrant. We have just as much right to do so as the Russians had to break the might of their tyrant. The fact that ours sits in Berlin furnishes no sufficient ground to change our view on this point. . . . The suppression of German Imperialism is obviously an interest and a necessity for the whole world. . . .

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, we consider it important to emphasise that in our opinion the inevitable struggle is a struggle against German Imperialism, not a struggle against the German people. . . .

We have no feeling of hatred against the German nation ; we have no desire to take revenge against them ; we have no desire to suppress them ; we wish only to free them in freeing ourselves ; we want to give them the right to dispose of their own affairs as the formula of the Russian Revolution demands. This right involves the liberation from every national as well as from every foreign despotism. Any project for the dismemberment of Germany or of Austria-Hungary, any plan to add German or Austro-Hungarian territories to a foreign Power against the will of their inhabitants or to compel the present empires to split up into independent sovereign territories, any plan of this kind would encounter our irreconcilable hostility (*nous trouverait irréductiblement hostiles*). We would adopt the same attitude towards any economic league which had as its object, or



might have as its result, that Germany should be hindered in the legitimate development of her industry, subjected to a tribute or economically isolated.

Such precautionary measures might become inevitable against the subjects of the Hohenzollerns, if these stubbornly insisted in linking their fate with that of their ruling family and in continuing to serve them against humanity. They are, however, excluded and they would fail against the resistance of the democracies of the world, if the attempt were made to apply them to a liberated Germany (*si l'on tentait de les appliquer à une Allemagne libérée*).

We regard a democratic constitution for Germany not merely as a right which that people can claim for themselves, but as a condition on which the other nations may rightly make their consent to the conclusion of a general peace dependent. . . .

The spirit which speaks in these sentences breathes through the whole of the long document of the Belgian statesman, who as such has never forgotten that he is the President of the Socialist International. It is the same spirit which has led the United States to take part in this struggle for peace, right and democracy, which has inspired the Russian people and rendered it capable of attaining its freedom and its right of self-determination. To attribute to such opponents tendencies to annihilation and suppression is only possible to those of narrow vision, who are themselves restricted within the hampered horizon of their outworn feudal reactionary views, and are incapable of recognising in the firmament beyond the mist in which they are enshrouded the glowing sun of the future. "Thou resemblest the spirit which thou comprehendest."<sup>1</sup>

#### GREY.

In exactly the same way as his colleague Asquith, Sir Edward Grey defined the English war-aims in his public statement of August 25th, 1915, in answer to Bethmann's previous speech in the Reichstag on August 19th :<sup>2</sup>

That (*i.e.*, the future formation of Europe indicated by the Chancellor) would be an iron peace and a freedom under a Prussian shield and under German supremacy. Germany supreme, Germany alone would be free ; free to break international treaties ; free to

<sup>1</sup> [Faust].

<sup>2</sup> Grey's significant speech of 23rd October, 1916, is discussed in the later chapter : "Bethmann the Pacifist."



crush when it pleased her ; free to refuse all mediation ; free to go to war when it suited her ; free, when she did go to war, to break again all rules of civilisation and humanity on land and at sea ; and, while she may act thus, all her commerce at sea is to remain as free in time of war as all commerce is in time of peace. Freedom of the sea may be a very reasonable subject for discussion, definition, and agreement between nations after this war ; but not by itself alone, not while there is no freedom and no security against war and German methods of war on land. If there are to be guarantees against future war, let them be equal, comprehensive and effective guarantees that bind Germany as well as other nations, including ourselves. Germany is to be supreme. The freedom of other nations is to be that which Germany metes out to them. . . . Not on such terms can peace be concluded or the life of other nations than Germany be free or even tolerable. The speeches of the German Chancellor and Finance Minister make it appear that Germany is fighting for supremacy and tribute.<sup>1</sup> If that is so and so long as it is so, our Allies and we are fighting and must fight for the right to live, not under German supremacy, but in real freedom and safety.

#### LLOYD GEORGE.

Asquith's successor in the English Premiership, Lloyd George—who, as I have pointed out elsewhere in this work, has in the whole course of his political career down to the present war been one of the most zealous and eloquent exponents of pacifist ideas amongst leading English politicians—Lloyd George, both as Minister for Munitions in the Asquith Cabinet and now as Prime Minister, has so frequently and so decisively emphasised the fact that England is not aiming at the annihilation and humiliation of the German people, but only means to render innocuous the Prussian Military autocracy that it would be necessary to produce columns of quotations in order to prove fully the standpoint of the English Minister.

Let us hear what Lloyd George said on April 12th, 1917, in an important political speech in the American Luncheon Club, with regard to the aim of the war in which America had then just entered :

I am in the happy position, I think, of being the first British Minister of the Crown who, speaking on behalf of the people of this

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<sup>1</sup> Herr Dr. Helfferich, then Secretary of the Treasury, had in addition to Bethmann's demands for territory, also demanded a war indemnity for Germany.



country, can salute the American nation as comrades in arms. I am glad not merely because of the stupendous resources which this great nation can bring to the succour of the Alliance, but I rejoice as a Democrat that the advent of the United States into this war gives the final stamp and seal to the character of the conflict as a struggle against military autocracy throughout the world. That was the note that rang through the great deliverance of President Wilson. The United States of America have a noble tradition, never broken, of having never engaged in a war except for liberty—and this is the greatest struggle for liberty they have ever embarked upon. . . . In Europe most of the great wars of the past were waged for dynastic aggrandisements and for conquest. . . . The fact that the United States of America has made up its mind finally makes it abundantly clear to the world that this is no struggle of that character, but a great fight for human liberty. . . .

That conference (the later peace conference) will settle the destiny of nations, the course of human life, for God knows how many ages. . . . I can see peace coming now, not a peace which would be a beginning of wars, not a peace which would be an endless preparation for strife and bloodshed; but a real peace. . . . Democracy means peace. The democracy of France did not want war. The democracy of this country shrunk from it and shuddered and would never have entered that cauldron if it had not been for the invasion of Belgium. Democracy sought peace, strove for peace, and if Prussia had been a democracy there would have been no war. To-day we are waging the most devastating war that the world has ever seen. To-morrow—not perhaps a distant to-morrow—war may be abolished for ever from the categories of human crimes.

These are the destructive intentions of the Entente statesmen towards Germany. That is the “condition of powerlessness as in past centuries” in which according to the assertion of the Chancellor the enemies of Germany wish to place the German Empire and people! Their purpose is to render innocuous the Prussian military autocracy, the Prussian military and Junker caste who have brought this unparalleled catastrophe upon the world. To no people would the destruction of these everlasting and incorrigible disturbers of the peace be of greater advantage than to the German people themselves. May they, acting courageously and powerfully from within, achieve the work which the others, acting from without, have set themselves to accomplish. Under this double pressure the last stronghold of military autocracy will and must collapse.



## VIVIANI.

The French statesmen, like those of England, have also stated on numberless occasions that their war-aim is not to achieve the suppression or dismemberment of Germany, but that their purpose is merely to render harmless Prussian militarism which they rightly hold responsible for this fearful world-war. It is not on the ruins of an impotent Germany but on the basis of equal right and equal freedom for all nations that France, like England, means to raise the future organisation of Europe. It was as a "reconstruction of a finally regenerated Europe on the basis of justice" that Viviani, then Prime Minister, defined the war-aims of the Allies a few months after the outbreak of war, on December 22nd, 1914.

DUEL BETWEEN BRIAND AND BETHMANN, SEPTEMBER, 1916.<sup>1</sup>

Briand, Viviani's successor, has repeatedly expressed himself to the same effect. As early as his speech on his accession to the Premiership on November 2nd, 1915, Briand, amidst the enthusiastic applause of the Chamber, defined the war-aims of the French Republic in the following terms :

What will this peace be ? Will it in any way be a peace of such a character that France in egotistical satisfaction will consent to the realisation of her special wishes ? No, gentlemen ! Our country will not descend to such a miserable and base conception of the part she is called upon to play. In this war—and that is her honour and her glory—France is the champion of the world. . . . If she sheathes the sword, she will do so after the attainment of complete guarantees for an enduring and stable peace. The peace so won for the world by France and her allies will have no *arrière-pensée* of tyrannical domination ; it will have paved the way for the progress of civilisation by the establishment of freedom and the complete autonomy of the nations.

On May 23rd, 1916, in a speech to the delegates of the Russian Government and the Russian Parliament, the

<sup>1</sup> This section was written in October, 1916, immediately after the discussions between Briand and Bethmann.



## BETHMANN THE ANNEXATIONIST III

French Premier put forward the following as the most important war-aim of the Allied Powers :

Peace must not be an empty formula. It must be based on international law and guaranteed by sanctions against which no country can rebel. Such a peace will shed its glory over mankind and will give the nations that security which will make it possible for them to toil and to unfold their genius. The menace of blood will no longer hover over them.

On September 14th, 1916, Briand, in the name of the French Government, read in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate a great political manifesto in which the war-aims of France were defined as follows :—

Peace by victory, a peace firm and enduring, guaranteed by appropriate international sanctions against any return of violence.

The preceding statements of the leading French statesman define France's war-aim with the same unambiguous clarity as is found in the statements of the English statesmen. Like Great Britain, the French Republic means to substitute a European condition of law in place of the existing condition of force. The attainments of the great French Revolution which procured for the citizens in progressive countries "*les droits de l'homme et du citoyen*," it means to extend in such a way that it will secure for States, the great as well as the small, "*les droits des nations*," the right to independence and self-determination, the *right to right* in all international disputes.

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The last-mentioned statement of policy by the French Premier gave occasion to an open discussion between Briand and Bethmann, which I am here constrained to consider more closely since it is of special interest. Its special interest lies in the fact that in his reply to Briand's speech (September 28th, 1916), Herr von Bethmann for the first time sounded certain pacifist notes which awakened in many optimists, particularly among the pacifists, the hope of a gradual change in the fundamental views of those in power in Germany. The hope, however, was soon shown to be as unsubstantial as a soap bubble, bursting suddenly with the first puff of wind. In fact with



Bethmann's reply to Briand's peace programme the music of peace on the German side began a slow *crescendo* which rose in Bethmann's great pacifist oration of November 9th, 1916, to a surprisingly powerful *fortissimo*, inspiring the above-mentioned optimists to intoxicating outbursts of applause. Those of us, however, who are incorrigible pessimists heard more clearly; we felt and marked behind the dulcet tones of the flutes the unchanged blare of military music, and we did not for a moment doubt that the wood instruments would soon be silent, and that the trumpets would again begin—that they would do so, in fact, as soon as the “accursed music of the flute” should cease to appear expedient or necessary to the gentlemen in Berlin. We observed the tactical intention and the performance grated upon us; we observed that what we were given was not, as the musicians would say a new *Leitmotiv*, but merely a lyrical *intermezzo*; it was not a fertile marriage with a new point of view, but merely a transitory flirtation, an exhibition of philandering without serious consequences. We were not deceived. The pacifist *fortissimo* of November, 1916, was followed by a rapid *decrescendo*, and now it is no longer possible to hear even a distant echo of the pleasing flute concert. In the later chapters of this section we shall examine this development more closely. At this point we are interested merely in those first germs of the pacifist episode in the political life of the German Chancellor, the first appearance of those perishable autumnal flowers which timidly peeped out in September, 1916, in the oratorical duel between Bethmann and Briand, destined so quickly to be once more destroyed and scattered by the stormy winter blasts of militaristic “*Real*”-politics.

In his speech of September 28th, 1916, in reply to Briand's speech of September 19th, the Chancellor once again expounded the war-aims of his opponents as they are reflected in his brain, or rather as he wishes to show them to the German people with the object of arousing the warlike spirit, which is gradually flagging:

The war-aims which our enemies more and more undisguisedly announce, admit of no misinterpretation; they are the lust of conquest and the desire for destruction! . . . It is their lust



of conquest which is responsible for the fact that mountains of dead are daily being heaped up. . . . What the British wish to do with Germany is clear beyond all doubt. Militarily defenceless, economically crushed and boycotted by all the world, condemned to an enduring condition of sickness—that is what the Germany will be that submits to England.

As contrasted with this the peace-loving Germany strives :

for nothing else than the defence of our right to life, freedom and development. . . . I represent German interests alone ; it is merely respect for German right and for German interests that we demand in peace from the other Powers. . . . When we were compelled in August, 1914, to draw the sword we all knew that we should have to defend our home and our hearth against a powerful, indeed an almost overwhelming, coalition. . . .

At every stage we thus encounter the old litany, the same rank growth of lying phrases. Defence of home and hearth, the sword drawn in defence of our right to life and freedom, etc.—all these we have heard to satiety. Of course, he could not fail to drawl out the phrases about the “French policy of revenge,” the “Russian lust of conquest,” the “English impulse to encirclement and world-dominion.” This hackneyed note the ingenious Chancellor again sounded on this occasion, but it no longer caught on in the German Parliament and among the German people. Never did the Chancellor deliver a speech which had so poor a reception in the Reichstag and in the Press, as that of September, 1916. At that time, when German victory on the battlefields was becoming more and more dubious, the German lie at home also appeared to be losing its breath. It was clear that the old *élan* no longer existed. It was for this reason that the attempt was made to instil artificial life into the waning enthusiasm for the “war of liberation” by applying to the patient—that is to say the German people—new and stronger doses of the old stimulants which no longer produced their proper effect in consequence of the deadening of the organism.

The everlasting recurring assertion of Herr von Bethmann that the British wish to crush Germany from an economic, political and military point of view, and that they mean to reduce her to impotence, has been, as we have seen above, clearly and succinctly repudiated by English



statesmen. But Herr von Bethmann is not to be reduced to silence. The initial lie of the German war of defence has so driven him into a blind alley that all he can do is to exclaim continually, despite all the statements of his adversaries : " It was you who attacked us ; you mean to crush us ; from the first day the war has been for us nothing but a war of defence."

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The most disagreeable feature in the eyes of the German Chancellor was obviously the fact that Briand, the French Premier, now openly acknowledged the English statesmen's pacifist war-aims which Herr von Bethmann had wilfully concealed in all his speeches, or rather had falsified into their antipodes. What in the circumstance does the Chancellor do with regard to this new and inconvenient opponent ? Well, well ; nothing is simpler. He treats Briand's speech in the same way as those of Grey and Asquith ; he falsifies it.

In his speech of September 14th, the French Premier, in a manuscript read by him, advanced the pacifist war-aim quoted above. What does Herr von Bethmann reply to this ?

" That is also our aim ; we mean to protect Germany for all time and against every attack."

By your leave, your Excellency ! What you want is exactly the opposite of what your French colleague wants. You want to protect Germany against attacks which, be it observed, no one has made on Germany. Your French colleague, however, wants to protect the peace of Europe, the peace of all nations—great as well as small—by an international organisation, by the domination of right over might. If you had and still have those pacifist peace-aims which the English and French statesmen have often enough proclaimed, why do you not say so distinctly ? Why do you make use of such wishy-washy, indistinct, jelly-fish expressions as open wide the door to every conceivable misunderstanding and to any manner of interpretation at a later date ? Why do you always speak, as you have again done on this occasion, merely of the security of



Germany, and not of the security of all nations, great as well as small? Above all, why do you not retract the demand for annexations, those gigantic demands for annexations in the East and the West, which you put forward in your earlier speeches as Germany's "aim of security," and which, if they were realised, would render it impossible to effect any pacifist organisation of Europe, and would in advance import into any conclusion of peace the distempered germs of new wars? Why? The answer is extremely simple. It is because your German peace of security is merely a peace resting on violence, and is therefore the direct opposite of the peace resting on law proclaimed by English and French statesmen, and demanded and expected by the whole world.

"That is also our aim," you exclaim. If you also want what M. Briand wants, you should first of all subscribe to the following solemn declaration:

"We are ready to evacuate France. We are ready to evacuate Belgium and restore her complete independence in a military, political and economic sense. We are ready to do the same with Serbia and Montenegro. We are ready to give full compensation to the countries devastated by us.

"We are ready to make a new Polish State independent of Germany, Austria or Russia, to be constituted out of Russian Poland, with the addition of certain portions of Prussian and Austrian territory.

"In the case of certain frontier territories, which have been subjected to a foreign Power against the will of their populations, we are ready to leave the populations themselves to decide to what land they will belong.<sup>1</sup>

"Above all, we are ready to pursue the work of The Hague in the direction of creating a European organisation resting on law in place of the so-called system

<sup>1</sup> I have fully explained my attitude on the question of Alsace-Lorraine in my pamphlet *The Salient Point*, by "Germanicus" (Zurich, 1916). See also the interesting pamphlet by S. Grumbach, which in its conclusions agrees with my views: *The Fate of Alsace-Lorraine* (Neuchâtel, 1915).



of the balance of power for the purpose of effecting a peaceful settlement of all disputes and a proportionate reduction of all armaments."

When you are ready and able to subscribe to such a declaration, then only, Herr von Bethmann, will you be entitled to say that Germany wants the same as England and France. But then in that case the peace for which all the nations so passionately long would have come; for once agreement had been attained on these main issues, all the other questions in dispute would, with good will on all sides, be disposed of without great difficulty.

But that is just the point; there's the rub. Such conditions of peace you have not offered, will not offer, and cannot offer, because you are the slave of the lie you yourself started, because you are the accomplice of your powerful fellow-liars who now hold you in a cleft stick, and who continue to urge you along the path of deceit. The war of defence demands the security of Germany against future attacks—that is the millstone which you have yourself hanged about your neck, and by which your partners in guilt, now your oppressors and afflictors, drag you ever onwards to destruction.

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In his speech of September 28th, 1916, Herr von Bethmann complains that the peace-conditions which he had previously announced had been rejected as "intolerable and humiliating." Are they not in fact so? Are the annexations on the East and West, on the North and South—even if this or that veiled form of annexation is chosen for the purpose—is the establishment of a German hegemony on the continent with all its pernicious consequences for the future tranquillity of this quarter of the globe—is the one-sided guarantee of the power of Germany, the refusal of any European order of law, of any restriction of armaments by treaty—are not all these unacceptable and intolerable for Europe and humiliating for Germany's enemies?—for those enemies, who are the parties attacked, and who are in no way disposed to recognise as a real victory the victory of the aggressor on the land map,—who set the sea map as a counterpart against the land map



and have so far refused to see a victory for Germany, but who hope for the future for its defeat ?

Herr von Bethmann points to the present war-map and believes that in virtue of it he will be in a position to dictate his German peace, regarding the extent of which the various parties are now in dispute in Germany. His adversaries say : " Very well, since you point to the war-map and assume the attitude of a conqueror, we will just have to alter the war-map, and in this way bring and compel you to reason and to a reasonable peace such as is necessary for the future of Europe." This is the idea running through all the speeches of the enemy statesmen : there is to be no crushing, no annihilation of Germany ; but a military situation must be created which will finally convince the Germans that it is not they who will be called upon to dictate peace, but that they will be called upon to acquiesce in a peace in the interests of all.

Herr von Bethmann falsifies this fundamental idea of his opponents in ascribing to enemy statesmen words and intentions which they have never expressed, and in laying at their doors the prolongation of the war, on the ground that they are unwilling to accept his victorious peace.

Despite the visible worsening of the military and economic situation of Germany, Bethmann—the prisoner of the Junkers and the Pan-Germans, of the Reactionaries and the Imperialists—has not abated one jot of his conqueror's terms. The further military pressure on Germany, the further victorious advance of the Allies, must therefore be the tragic means of at length passing from night to day, of arriving through further streams of blood at a peace rich in blessing.

RIBOT, WILSON, PROVISIONAL RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT,  
ETC.

In a speech delivered on May 5th, 1917, in honour of the English and Italian Parliamentary representatives, Ribot, Briand's successor in the French premiership,



expressed himself as follows regarding the war-aims of the Entente Powers :

We have no thought of suppressing any nation or any nationality, not even that of our enemies. But we want guarantees, restitution, compensation and chastisement for the authors of the crimes against the universal rule of law, on whom the guilt of this war rests. After the war we will think, not of punishment, but of justice. It is necessary for the honour of our civilisation and for the salvation of future generations that certain base crimes should not remain unpunished.

The same idea as that here expressed by the French Premier, the repudiation of any intention to annihilate the German people and the peoples allied with them, permeates all the statements of the President of the United States after the outbreak of the war with Germany. It would take us too far to quote even a mere section of Wilson's utterances in this sense.<sup>1</sup> Let us merely take the following sentences from his message to Congress of April 2nd :

Our object now, as then, is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish autocratic power. . . . Neutrality is no longer feasible or desirable where the peace of the world is involved, and the freedom of its peoples and the menace to that peace and freedom lie in the existence of autocratic Governments backed by organised force, which is controlled wholly by their will and not by the will of their people. . . . We have not quarrelled with the German people. We have no feeling towards them but one of sympathy and friendship. It was not upon their impulse that their Government acted in entering this war. It was not with their previous knowledge or approval. . . .

We are now about to accept the gage of battle with this natural foe to liberty. . . . The world must be safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon trusted foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquests and no dominion. We seek no indemnities for ourselves and no material compensation for sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but one of the champions of the rights of mankind, and shall be satisfied when those rights are as secure as fact and the freedom of nations can make them. Just because we fight without rancour and without selfish objects, seeking nothing for ourselves but what we shall wish to share with all free peoples, we shall, I feel confident, conduct our operations as belligerents without passion, and ourselves observe

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<sup>1</sup> In the later chapter, "Bethmann, the Offerer of Peace," I return in detail to Wilson's Peace Programme.



with proud punctilio the principles of right and fair play we profess to be fighting for. . . . We are sincere friends of the German people, and shall desire nothing so much as an early re-establishment of intimate relations. . . .

That the Russian Revolutionary Government is in entire agreement with its Allies, England, France and America, in rejecting any policy of violence against the German people requires no special proof, having regard to the origin and the aims of the newly arisen Russian democracy. Nevertheless, for the purpose of completing the picture, I will here reproduce a few sentences from the declaration of the Provisional Government of April 10th, 1917 :

The Provisional Government leaves it to the will of the people, in close community of action with our allies, to decide finally with regard to all questions relating to the world-war and to its conclusion. But at the same time it considers it to be its right and its duty to state at once that it is not the aim of free Russia to rule other peoples, to deprive them of their national inheritance, and to occupy foreign territory by force ; on the contrary, its purpose is rather to bring about an enduring peace on the ground of the right of the nations to determine their own destiny. The Russian people is not striving for the increase of its external power at the cost of other peoples ; its aim is not to enslave or humiliate any nation.

On February 11th, 1915, long before the outbreak of the Russian Revolution, Rodzianko, the President of the Russian Duma, who was later called upon to play a leading part in the Revolution, described this war as a " world-wide struggle between two conflicting principles, the principle of international law and international peace on the one hand and ravenous and brutal militarism on the other."

It is interesting in this connection to refer to a letter which Okuma, the Japanese Premier, who is at the same time President of the Japanese Peace Society, addressed in the end of November, 1915, to the Committee of the Peace Congress at San Francisco. In this we read :

The essential cause of this world-war appears to me to be the desire of certain people to rule the others. So long as there are nations or individuals who believe that they are absolutely superior



to others and who do not shrink from brutal violence in order to demonstrate their superiority, so long will a propaganda in favour of peace fail to reach its goal. Fortunately everyone now understands quite well who is responsible for the beginning of this war. . . . Costly and hard as this war may be, it is the struggle of right against violence, of freedom and independence against militarism and oppression, of Internationalisation against Nationalism. I am convinced that after this fearful experience the nations of the earth will realise the insanity of armed peace, and will combine to establish the enduring dominance of law and of justice.

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A few days after the most extravagant annexationist speech which the German Chancellor ever delivered the *Humanité* in a leading article on April 8th, 1916, gave an excellent, short and precise definition of the war-aims of the Entente Powers—a definition which has been repeated hundreds of times by the Socialist paper in the same sense, if in various forms :

The war-aim which the Allies have proclaimed from the first day is for them : respect for right, the attempt to render German militarism incapable of again plunging this world into the abyss of blood and horror.

The famous resolution of the French Socialists on December 30th, 1915, gave expression to the same views, in putting forward as their war-aims :

To reduce Prussian militarism to accept the procedure of law, that is to say to oblige it to destroy itself by denying its *raison d'être*.

In a series of resolutions of earlier and later date the French Socialist Party has defined the most important war-aims of the Entente Powers, and in doing so it has always placed in the forefront the creation of a *Société des Nations*, of an obligatory international system of arbitration with coercive power, the proportionate reduction of armaments, etc.—in short, all the institutions and measures transcending the individual state, which are meant to make this war the last of all wars. The French Socialist Party has always rejected with the utmost emphasis any territorial, military or economic oppression or bondage of the German people, on the ground



that any such proposition would be inconsistent with their principles and would create the germs of new wars. This consistent attitude of the French Socialists in opposition to any peace resting on violence deserves to be specially emphasised inasmuch as, having regard to the position of authority occupied by the Socialists in France and their participation in the Government, we are here concerned not with the utterances of irresponsible persons or parties, but with the statement of the views prevalent in the governing circles of the Republic.

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I must here content myself with the preceding utterances of the leading men and groups on the side of the Entente Powers. In the later chapter, "Bethmann the Offerer of Peace," I shall consider in detail the official peace demands of the Allied Powers put forward during the discussions with special reference to peace in the months from December, 1916, to February, 1917. At present I am merely concerned to inquire whether in his speech of April 5th, 1916, as in all his other speeches, the Chancellor was justified in accusing Germany's enemies of entertaining designs to crush and annihilate the German people. I believe that I have proved by the foregoing compilation of quotations that this charge is destitute of all foundation and that on the contrary it is completely contradicted by the facts. This *résumé* of the utterances of the leading statesmen of the Entente is also of value inasmuch as it facilitates an understanding of the attitude assumed at a later date by the Entente Powers in the discussions more directly concerned with peace. While for more than two years Germany has confined herself to advancing demands for conquests and annexation (which even to-day she has not yet retracted, and has indeed partly carried into effect), ever since the beginning of the war the leading men of the Entente have placed in the foreground, as their most important aim, the prevention of future wars by an organisation of the community of nations resting on law. This fact must be kept in view as the point of departure in judging the later demands of the Entente during the discussions specially directed to peace.



GERMANY'S WAR-AIMS.<sup>1</sup>

In order to elaborate the antagonism between the war-aims of the Entente Powers and those of the Central Powers with even greater distinctness than has already been done in the preceding compilation, I add a series of statements emanating from the leading circles in Germany which, while they vary in the degree of arrogance which they show in their demand for conquests, are without exception in agreement on the fundamental feature that for Germany it can only be a *German* peace, based on "real" power, and not a *European* peace resting on law, that can be considered. The dominant aim of the Powers united on the other side—England, France, America, and the newly arisen Russia—the league of peace of the nations, the creation of an international state of law for the prevention of future wars, still remains for the authoritative circles in Germany a Utopia which admits of no discussion. The announcements sent into the world on the conclusion of the second year of war by the intellectual and political leaders of the German people, above all by the Emperor himself, are interesting and significant of this state of mind.

## THE EMPEROR

Even to-day the German Emperor undeviatingly maintains the lie of the attack by the enemy. In his proclamation addressed to the German people on July 31st, 1916, we read :

"For the second time the day returns on which the enemy compelled me to call Germany's sons to arms to protect the honour and the existence of the Empire. . . . But the war continues, because the rallying-cry of those who hold power among our enemies is still the annihilation of Germany. On our enemies alone falls the guilt of further bloodshed. . . .

"The German people knows that its existence is at stake. . . . We will continue this struggle to an

<sup>1</sup> Written in Autumn, 1916.



end which will protect our Empire from renewed attack, and will assure for all time to come a free field for the peaceful labour of the German spirit and of German hands. Free, safe and strong we mean to dwell among the nations of the globe."

Exactly to the same effect we read in the Emperor's proclamation addressed on the same day to the German army :

"It is in a hard struggle that we must continue to wrestle for the security of our dear ones, for the honour of the Fatherland and for the greatness of the Empire."

Once again, it will be observed, there is the old litany : the attack of the enemy, protection against new attacks, the greater security of Germany, a free field for Germany's development in intellectual and material respects. As if the world had not stood open to us, as to all other nations, by land and sea ! As if we had not enriched the oceans with our shipping, the near and the remote quarters of the globe with our trade and our industry ! As if we had not fructified, and indeed partly dominated, the whole world with our technical, scientific, literary and artistic achievements ! Has the Emperor William II. completely forgotten all the festive publications written in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession, which statistically proved and enthusiastically lauded the phenomenal development of Germany in every field of human activity during the last quarter of a century ? Have we not lived "free, safe and strong" among the nations of the globe ? When, where and by whom was Germany threatened with annihilation, either before or during the war ? Who dares to ascribe to the enemies of Germany such destructive intentions when the leading statesmen on the other side have so often, so clearly, and so concisely repudiated this charge ? On the last occasion, in the answer of the Entente Powers to Wilson (of January 12th, 1917) we find :

There is no need to say that, if the Allies desire to shield Europe from the covetous brutality of Prussian militarism, the extermination



and the political disappearance of the German peoples have never, as has been pretended, formed part of their designs. They desire, above all, to ensure peace on the principles of liberty and justice.

#### TIRPITZ AND HIS FOLLOWERS

The commentary on the above announcements of the Emperor is furnished by the thirty-eight speeches of the members of the "German National Committee for the Preparation of an Honourable Peace," delivered on a pre-arranged plan in thirty-eight towns of the German Empire during the first days of the third year of war. These speeches are specially characteristic for the very reason that the Committee in question was founded for the purpose of carrying on a campaign against the hyper-annexationist efforts of the Prussian-German war party, of the Tirpitzians, and it was thus intended to represent a middle line between the extremes of the left and the right.

At this point I need not again expatiate in detail on the aims of the Tirpitz party, who want to annex the half of Europe, and in addition large portions of territory in every conceivable quarter of the globe, who recommend as a means to this end the wholesale drowning of innocent ship's passengers by submarines, the wholesale destruction of open towns by Zeppelins and aeroplanes, who in the pursuit of their aims and the application of their methods are untroubled by a handful of enemies more or less, but regard it as a matter of indifference even if America should join the ranks of Germany's enemies.<sup>1</sup> I need not further concern myself with the aims of this party which appears to have been ousted temporarily from authority, but according to familiar experience may at any moment regain that power which for years before the war it exercised in so baleful a manner. I have already sufficiently described these aims elsewhere. It is however interesting to observe how the chief of the Tirpitzians, the Great Admiral von Tirpitz himself, on the occasion of the second anniversary of the outbreak of war, has defined his very own war-aims. The *Hamburger Fremden-*

<sup>1</sup> As has indeed fortunately happened in the interval.



*blatt* of August 5th, 1916, publishes a telegram of the Great Admiral addressed to Councillor Händler of Coblenz on July 28th, which runs as follows :

Hearty thanks for your friendly letter of the 8th, and for the poetical lines which accompany it. May there be an increasing understanding in our Fatherland, that Germanism can only maintain itself and achieve its purpose if we emerge from the war with an assured position as against Anglo-Americanism. We shall attain this position if it is we, and not England, who become the predominant Power in Vlandern. Your faithful countryman, von Tirpitz; Great Admiral; Member of the Upper House.

I will not dispute with the Great Admiral regarding the orthography of the world Flanders, although I am of the opinion that a hapless country which is deprived of all its other rights should at least retain the right to its own name. Flanders—by your permission—is written with an “ F ” and not a “ V.”

But let us leave orthography aside. What does Herr von Tirpitz demand in order that “ Germanism ” may maintain itself and achieve its purpose ? It is necessary to have a “ position as against Anglo-Americanism.” What does that mean ? Are England and America one State ? Were they even allies when Herr von Tirpitz wrote his telegram ? It was only as a result of the Tirpitzian submarine policy that they became allied with each other. Apart from community of language was there any other link between them ? It is not even possible to speak of a community of race in the case of the English and the Americans, in view of the mixture of race from all the peoples in the earth—German, Roman, Slavs, Mongolians, Yellow, Brown and Black—which is to be found in the United States. What then does the Great Admiral mean by his “ position as against Anglo-Americanism ” ? And, how, more particularly as against the Americans, is Germany’s position of predominance in Flanders to be the fundamental condition of the maintenance and realisation of Germanism. To the Americans it is in itself a matter of complete indifference whether Germany or any one else is the “ predominant Power ” in Flanders ; they are sufficiently powerful to make it unnecessary for them to trouble about these European disputes as to possession.



This position of predominance only acquires interest for them, in so far as in the nature of things it can only be acquired by a more or less extensive annexation of the unfortunate neutral country which commands all the sympathies of America. From this point of view nothing could be more pernicious for Germanism in the eyes of Americans than just the attempt recommended by Tirpitz to violate in any way the integrity and the complete independence of the Kingdom of Belgium. Such an attempt would produce an effect directly contrary to that foreseen by Tirpitz. The sympathies and antipathies of the Americans towards the European nations—none of whom they have any occasion to fear—are not based on the greater or less territorial extent of this or that State, but on the extent to which the individual European States accept the efforts propagated primarily by America for a peaceful organisation of the nations. It is not the possession of, or as Herr von Tirpitz so beautifully expresses it, the “predominant Power” on, the coast of Flanders that will impress the Americans or gain their sympathy; this will be gained merely by the inclination to an understanding among the nations, and to the peaceful organisation of humanity, by the aversion from feudalistic narrow-mindedness, from military absolutism and from mediæval barbarism. Only if Germany becomes modern and democratic, opposed to war and pacifist, will it be able to maintain or realise itself as against “Americanism.” But it will not do so by gaining possession of, or a position of predominant Power in, any part of European territory.

What, however, is the meaning of the phrase that Germany is to become the predominant Power in Flanders? I have indeed heard it said (see Bernhardi, Pan-Germany, etc.) that Germany is to become the predominant Power on the European continent, indeed the predominant Power of the world.

For the world will one day find  
Healing in the German mind.

But the predominant Power in Flanders? That I fail to understand. Is it possible to become the predominant Power in Mecklenburg, in Schleswig-Holstein, in East



Prussia? It is possible to possess these territories, and if one does not already possess them, it is possible to annex them. Presumably the Tirpitzian phraseology is merely a euphemism for annexation. As the sentences of the Great Admiral stand, however, they are from beginning to end the most perfect nonsense that ever flowed from the pen of anyone laying claim to political education and influence. And this man is the recognised leader of that dangerous party of firebrands on which rests the chief guilt of this war, the party which has bullied and challenged the whole world into the lists against Germany, which with its boundless war-aims is continuing the wholesale carnage for which it is responsible until all the nations are bled white, which indeed is in a fair way to bring about the physical and economic downfall of the European world of civilisation. This mariner, whose plans have only for the time being come to grief, but whose pugnacious spirit is in no way extinguished, who behind the scenes courageously pulls the strings of the anti-Bethmann intrigue,<sup>1</sup> this herald of the "predominant Power in Vlandern" (with a V), this man who realises Germanism against "Anglo-Americanism"—this great spirit has become the brain and the executive hand of Pan-Germany. His name signifies a system. From Bethmann's frying-pan we are to fall into Tirpitz's fire. And indeed we have already had it hot enough in Bethmann's frying-pan. . . .

#### THE "GERMAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE"

As against these Tirpitzian extremes the "German National Committee for the Preparation of an Honourable

<sup>1</sup> As was to be expected, success has not failed to attend this political wire-pulling. Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, who was only moderately annexationist and was moreover suspected of leanings to democratic concessions, has been replaced by the candidate of the Crown Prince and of Generals Hindenburg and Ludendorff without any co-operation or consultation with Parliament. The speech of the new Chancellor on taking up office (July 19th, 1917), in which he puts forward as the most important German war-aim "the security of the German frontiers for all time," proves that he will show himself not unworthy of the confidence of his military patrons and protectors.



Peace," called into life and conducted by Prince Wedel, the former governor of Alsace-Lorraine, explicitly occupies in its appeal the same ground as the war-aims of the Chancellor: "Advancement of the frontiers in the East, real guarantees in the West; without both these, there must be no peace and no surrender of occupied territories." The speeches delivered in the first days of August, 1916, were in agreement with this programme. The chief speaker in Berlin, his excellency Professor Dr. von Harnack, stated:

He also wished no *status quo ante*; we need guarantees by land and sea; a great German colonial Empire must be created. Germany and her allies must be protected against attacks in future. . . . The guarantees which must be demanded are first, the repression of Russia within her natural frontiers, and as a consequence of this the establishment of a frontier between Western civilisation and Russia, whose mission lies in the East; and, secondly, guarantees in the West against England's naval supremacy and against the transformation of Belgium into an English satrapy.

How well Privy Councillor von Harnack, for many years the intimate friend of the Emperor William, reproduced the ideas of his monarch is proved by the congratulatory telegram which the Emperor sent to thank him for his patriotic lecture.

All the speeches of the members of the National Committee were in the same key and acknowledged similar war-aims. The speakers belonged to all the civil parties—apart from the Conservatives—including even the right wing of the Social Democrats. Rohrbach, Payer, Kahl, Haussmann, Oncken, Südekum, Naumann, Liszt, all blew the same trumpet in unison: Germany has been attacked; it is intended that Germany should be annihilated; Germany needs greater protection and greater freedom of development for its future. Not one of these many speakers, who all belong to the German intellectuals, and, as already observed, represent the moderate tendency in the matter of war-aims—not one of them, according to the reports which lie before me, uttered a single word about a European system resting on law, which would guarantee the peace and the security of all nations alike. Only slight shades of difference exist between these moderate politicians



of violence and annexation and the immoderate politicians on the extreme right. In essence, both desire the same thing. Both think merely of Germany, and not of Europe ; both occupy the deceitful standpoint of the war of defence ; both demand a peace which cannot but be fatal for Europe, and in the first place fatal for Germany herself. At the same time, the moderate representatives of the National Committee, as well as the immoderate representatives of the Right, are completely conscious of the dangers for the future of Europe involved in their demands in the matter of war-aims. Even a Harnack already counts on a new war. For the internal industrial configuration of Germany he recommends "mixed undertakings under the participation of the Communes or the State," and on the institution of such undertakings he bases the hope : "Should that be attained, German industrial life might stand the test in quite a different manner in a new war" (Report of *Vorwärts* on Harnack's meeting of August 2nd, 1916).

It is impossible within the scope of this work to reproduce even a small portion of the announcements, emanating from all the authoritative classes of the German people, which in the matter of war-aims represent the same standpoint as the Emperor, the Chancellor, the Annexationists and the hyper-Annexationists.<sup>1</sup> It may be said without exaggeration that seven-eighths of all those Germans who are called upon to mould the destiny of their country by their power, their influence or their intelligence subscribe to Harnack's sentence : "To look for a peace that will automatically bring security for all time is a Utopia." The peace that will thus automatically bring security—declared by the learned professor to be a Utopia—is the peace resting on law, which for generations all progressive minds throughout the whole world have recognised as the only possible salvation for Europe from the international anarchy, eternally threatening and eternally bringing forth wars ; it is the peace resting on law, the necessity

<sup>1</sup> I again invite attention to the distinguished compilation by S. Grumbach, *Germany's Annexationist Aims*, which appeared in February, 1917, while my book was in the press, and which therefore unfortunately could not be made more use of by me.



of which has been forced on the blindest as a result of the present war; it is the peace resting on law which the allied adversaries of Germany and Austria have inscribed on their banners as their most important war-aim. These German intellectuals do not see, and do not want to see, the finger of history. They will remain blind until the wheel of history has passed over them, grinding to dust both them and their country. It is not the annihilation of Germany, but the annihilation of Germany's egotism, of Germany's infatuation, of Germany's retrograde short-sightedness, which cannot but plunge Europe once more into the former unrest—it is the elimination of this danger for the future that constitutes the aim of the allied enemies of Germany.

#### WAR-AIMS AND ACTUAL BEHAVIOUR BEFORE THE WAR.

I must here restrict myself to the foregoing quotations regarding the war-aims of the two groups of Powers; they could be multiplied indefinitely. They not merely represent the words of leading statesmen and politicians, the credibility of which might be denied, but they are also in complete agreement with the actual behaviour of the Governments in question in the more remote period before the outbreak of war and in the days of conflict which immediately led to the outbreak. I have exhaustively dealt with all these points elsewhere, and here I need only briefly recall them:

The Hague Conferences suggested by the Russian Emperor had no other object than the elimination of violence from the relations existing between the nations, and its replacement by law and peaceful understanding. The Entente Powers, England, France, and Russia, concurred in all the proposals for the establishment of compulsory arbitration and commissions of inquiry, and for the limitation of armaments by treaty. Germany and Austria offered to these proposals an immovable opposition. In consequence of Germany's resistance, the question of armaments, which in the Tsar's invitation to the first conference was placed in the very forefront of all the



problems to be considered, could not even get so far as a discussion, but had to be buried by means of an empty resolution.

The Anglo-German negotiations for an understanding (1909-1912) after the failure of the Hague Conferences, which were meant to afford Germany every possible guarantee against any attacks on the part of England or her partners in the Entente, were doomed to failure, since Germany refused to be satisfied with this guarantee, and instead demanded England's neutrality, even in the event of a war "forced on" the German Empire. What Germany understands by a war forced upon her is shown by the present world-war.

Germany and Austria were always and on every occasion the opponents of any European organisation which would have limited their efforts for power and their liberty to arm themselves. The Entente Powers have always shown themselves to be the supporters and the promoters of such an organisation, and once again immediately before the war, on July 30th, 1914, Grey in his celebrated Note (No. 101 of the English Blue Book) repeated the proposals which had been rejected by Germany in 1912—those proposals which were intended to bridge the chasm between the Triple Alliance and the Triple Entente and substitute the European community in place of the European balance.

Even if one disregards the other unwearying efforts for peace made by England and Russia, these Powers, by their actions in the critical days before the outbreak of war, gave practical proof of their will to have disputes between the European nations settled, no longer by the power of the sword, but according to right and justice: England by the proposal of the London Conference of Ambassadors, and Russia by the suggestion that the Austro-Serbian dispute should be brought before the Hague Tribunal.

Thus the war-aims of the Entente Powers stand in the closest relationship to their attitude in times of peace. They are the logical consequence of those efforts which they desired to realise by peaceful methods, and which now, when the struggle has broken out against their will—for them in the true sense a war "forced upon"



them—they proclaim as the object for which they are fighting, and the only possible security for the future.

It is in this sense, and only in this sense, that they are striving to render Prussian militarism innocuous. No one in the world thinks of ruining Prussia and Germany in a political, military or economic sense. Everyone knows that such an attempt at suppression applied to a great, powerful and energetic nation, must not merely prove unsuccessful, but must produce the contrary effect and engender a doubled resistance and a heightened resilience in those oppressed. Even a Napoleon could only keep the small Prussian nation for a few years under foreign domination—and is it suggested that European statesmen should now presume to annihilate, dismember and suppress the great and strong Germany which is, moreover, supported by strong allies? Whom does Herr von Bethmann really hope to persuade of the truth of such destructive intentions on the part of his enemies? At the most his credulous, all too credulous, countrymen, to whom he seeks to make his own plans of conquest more appetising by serving them up with the sauce of foreign plans of conquest; at the most the hapless, deluded German people who with lamb-like patience sacrifice their sons and their wealth on the altar of the Fatherland, and still refuse to recognise the wires by which the high directors of the world-theatre have staged this cruelly tragic puppet play.

Produce your evidence, Herr von Bethmann, produce your evidence for the assertion that it is intended to annihilate Germany.<sup>1</sup> Yes, if Germany were identical with its Pan-Germans, its militarists, its reactionaries, its Junkers, its Imperialists and, above all, its Imperator, then you might ascribe to your enemies the intention to destroy Germany. It is these castes, classes and ranks—unfortunately dominant—which they desire to make inoffensive, because they do not propose to make the fate

<sup>1</sup> Even the most recent demands in the matter of war-aims as set out in the Entente's Note to Wilson (of January 12th, 1917) contain nothing which even in the most remote manner amounts to an annihilation of Germany. I return to this Entente Note in the Chapter "Bethmann the Offerer of Peace."



of Europe and of its civilisation dependent once more on the lust for booty and for blood, on the megalomania and the fanaticism of power of these Prussian spokesmen and leaders of thought.

#### WHAT IS PRUSSIAN MILITARISM? WHAT IS PRUSSIAN JUNKERDOM?

Europe and the world have quite correctly recognised where the seat of the malady of war is to be found, which is the bacillus that has produced the plague of war. Indeed the diagnosis is no hard task. That Prussian spirit, which is called the spirit of war, is a quite peculiar growth of the Prussian soil. It is a remnant of mediæval feudal views which has been preserved only in the Eastern provinces of Prussia, which lie somewhat apart from the development of civilisation; under the anxious care of the Hohenzollerns, under the energetic ascent of the Prussian kingdom to the dignity of the German Empire, this spirit has arrived at a new period of prosperity and a new stage of evolution. To-day this military Prussian-Hohenzollern system of recklessness finds its most complete and "sympathetic" embodiment in the heir to the Prussian kingdom and the German Empire. His writings, his speeches, his actions, his appeals to his army, even his war photographs, which flauntingly appear in all the illustrated papers with the everlastingly smiling and radiantly contented countenance, prove that in the present "Keep at it" he feels entirely in his element, that for him war is not the worst scourge of mankind, but the most lofty exemplification of creative human energy, the noblest task imposed on those who are rulers by the grace of God.

In the past, in the days of peace there has been infinite discussion on the question: "What is Prussian Militarism?" and there has been even more in the course of the war. In peace everything that passes for an opposition in Germany was more or less in agreement with foreign countries as to the conception of Prussian militarism. Now, in the course of the war, the Democratic parties and indeed the greater part of the Social Democrats of Germany, have



suddenly forgotten all that they had formerly advanced in arraignment of Prussian militarism. Now, with the solitary exception of the insignificant handful of Socialists on the Left, it is not merely Pan-Germany, but the *whole* of Germany, that asserts that Prussian militarism is not really so bad as it is painted, that when you get to the bottom of it, it is not really a bad thing at all, but that it is, on the contrary, a blessing to the German people, that it forms the backbone and the pivotal support of the military and economic resisting power of Germany, and that it differs from the militarism of other countries only to its advantage.

Militarism—so we are now told—is in essence nothing more than military preparations carried to the highest point of perfection. The degree of technical perfection thus achieved in Prussian Germany is distinguished merely in degree, and not in character, from the militarisms of other countries. The English superiority in naval armaments, for example, is to be treated as entirely on the same footing as German superiority in land armaments, and English “Marinism”—this word has been invented during the war specially for the purpose of this demonstration—is in essence exactly the same thing by sea as Prussian militarism is by land.

This demonstration, which at the first glance appears entirely plausible, may perhaps deceive and convince strangers who are not acquainted with Prussian militarism at close quarters, who have not enjoyed the good fortune to have been born, to have grown up and to have reached political maturity in Prussia. Just as it is impossible to convey to a stranger, that is to say to one who is not a German, or even to one who is not a Prussian, what a Prussian Junker is, so it would be impossible ever to give him a clear notion of the nature of Prussian militarism. “Junker” and “militarism” are to such a peculiar extent Prussian ideas, indeed within Prussia they belong so pre-eminently to the provinces of East Elbe, that it is only he who from his youth has seen these men and felt their mental point of view, only he who has lived and suffered among them, who can form a clear idea of the essential meaning of these terms. Nowhere else in the world is it possible to



find this peculiar mixture of social presumption, avarice, lust of domination, narrow-mindedness and brutal recklessness towards both those above and those below, when their own interests and advantages are at stake—of subtle intrigue against obnoxious members of the Government who may be unwilling to dance entirely according as the Junkers pipe—of brutal abuse of legislation relating to customs, taxes and finance for the purpose of relieving themselves and of laying as much of the burden as possible on all other classes, even on the poorest—of ruthless exploitation of family relationships, and of friendships originating in University Corps, with the object of controlling the administration, of securing the fattest posts and of pushing their cousins and friends. At the same time, these people are, and always have been, masters in the art of concealing their class egotism behind the well-sounding phrases of throne and altar, of discipline and morality, of God, the King, and the Fatherland.

Their caste is an agrarian, military and official caste. The eldest son inherits the estate, the younger ones must be provided for in the army or in officialdom—but not in those official careers which demand laborious, daily, self-sacrificing labour in the administrative offices, but, if it is at all possible, in political officialdom, where less depends on intelligence, knowledge and industry than on stylishness and trustworthiness of political sentiment. In the political administration which is under the Ministry of the Interior, in the career which, beginning from Land Councillor (Landrat) leads through the “Regierungs-presidium” to the provincial administration and to the Ministry, it is there that we find the favourite hunting-ground of the younger sons of the Junker families, so far as they do not find employment in officers’ corps or, if they have the necessary means or if a rich marriage allows, in the Diplomatic Service.

The intellectual equipment which these high-born gentlemen are accustomed to bring with them into their responsible offices I will merely illustrate by a proclamation on the subject of German war-aims which Herr von Schwerin, the Royal Prussian Governmental President of Frankfort-on-the-Oder, issued in January,



1915, to the inspectors of schools in his area. Herr von Schwerin does not bear in vain the well-known name of the Prussian Mecklenburg Junker families; his views are worthy of his name. His instructions are aimed at banishing from the school-room the "efforts which spring from the feelings of general fraternisation among the nations and of international enthusiasm for peace"—those efforts which seek on educational grounds to counteract "the extension and the deepening of international hatred and to prepare for the future reconciliation of civilised nations." Such views as these, according to Herr von Schwerin, must be unconditionally banished from the school-room. The young brains must be imprinted with the idea

that Germany's peace and security can be guaranteed only by her forces by land and by sea, and that all efforts to secure fraternisation on cultural grounds with other nations must never be allowed to lead even to the slightest reduction in her military preparations.

Herr von Schwerin then goes on to speak of the blessing of a strong monarchy, of the "scandalous actions which our enemies have committed against the Germans throughout the whole world," and which must be neither palliated nor excused in speaking to the scholars.

This, expressed in praiseworthy brevity and precision, is the intellectual programme for the future of Prussian Junkerdom. A strong monarchy here means the suppression of every democratic impulse and development; the continued domination of the main supports of this monarchy, that is to say, the Junkers, the Agrarians, the militarists and the reactionaries; the extermination of every idea of a future understanding and reconciliation of the civilised nations, every idea of the possibility and desirability of an organisation of the European community of States resting on law. In place of this, there is to be an undeviating continuance of the system of armaments and of armed peace.

The recognition of the fact that this system has miserably broken down in the present war of the nations has not yet dawned on the intellectual horizon of a Prussian Governmental President, that is to say, one of the highest officials of the State. That this system of costly insanity could not



be continued, even if the desire to continue it existed, for the simple reason that the nations could not, in addition to the ruinous expenditure on war, produce money for new competition in armaments, is a financial and economic truth, in no way dependent on the political standpoint assumed, of which this Prussian Governmental President has not yet the faintest idea. In addition to the sum of 150 million pounds a year already required merely to pay the interest on war loans,<sup>1</sup> Germany may perhaps have to raise an equal yearly sum in respect of those who have fallen, the bereaved, the maimed, the ruined and the injured, for the purpose of making good the economic and military values which have been destroyed, that is to say, on the present situation, a total sum of about 300 million pounds (not counting future current military and naval estimates). All this, however, in no way troubles the high Prussian official; he undeviatingly holds aloft the banner of armed peace as the only protection of Germany. But his fate, and that of those who are of the like mind, will be the same as that of his ancestor, General Schwerin, who fell with the standard in his hand—albeit in a more honourable grave.

As a Prussian, I say with the deepest conviction, from the study and the experience of a long life, that the Prussian Junkers will always remain what they are, blind and deaf to every development of modern intellectual and international life, hide-bound in the hoary views and prejudices of their caste, impudent and presumptuous in their narrow-mindedness, narrow-minded in their impudence and presumption. They will be what they are or they will be no longer. It is the business of the German people to make the latter part of this alternative a reality. So long as the Junkers constitute the dominant class in Prussia, and by the mediation of Prussia in the German Empire also, any idea of an amelioration of Prussian-German conditions and consequently of an enduring peace-organisation of Europe is excluded. The Prussian Junker as he reveals himself

<sup>1</sup> This calculation rests on the sum of 3,000 million pounds war loan which has meanwhile been long outstripped. The total amount of the war loans approved up to July, 1917, had already reached 4,700 million pounds.



unadulterated in the circular of President Schwerin—one example among hundreds of thousands—is the bacillus of Europe's malady. To render once for all these noxious persons innocuous is the most urgent, but at the same time the most difficult, task awaiting German democracy. Let us hope that after the bitter experience of this war the deluded and enslaved German nation will find the strength to free itself from the Junkers, these leeches and blood-suckers of Germany.

#### NOBLES, "CORPS-BROTHERS" AND RESERVE OFFICERS

With regard to the predominance of the nobility in diplomacy and in military life, so much has already been written that any further discussion is otiose. But even in the offices of the "Landrat," in the governments and in the provincial administrations, Junkers or those who are or would like to be Junkers abound; even there it teems with brothers of feudal corps, with reserve officers of feudal regiments. The ribbon of membership of a corps and the epaulettes of an officer of reserves—these are the talismans which for the high-born Prussian open all the doors to offices in the State, these are what offer to his feet all the rungs on the ladder of the official hierarchy.

Any one in Prussian Germany is a made man if he simultaneously possesses these three qualifications: that of having been born a Prussian Junker, of having played an active part in an exclusive corps, with the Prussians of Bonn (to which traditionally the Prussian princes belong; the Emperor William is also a Prussian of Bonn), with the Saxoborussen of Heidelberg or in some other similar union, and, thirdly, that of holding the high rank of an officer of reserve in a feudal, preferably a cavalry, regiment. His qualifications for the highest offices decrease in proportion as he is found to lack these three qualifications; the Junker and corps student counts for less than the Junker, corps student and officer of reserves. The corps student and reserve officer, who happens to be merely of common birth, has incomparably worse chances than his corps-brothers and regimental comrades who can



place the little word "von" before their names. It is true that this deficiency can often be remedied. If the young man has a countenance adorned with smart rapier cuts, and is able to show to advantage his dignified carriage in the becoming uniform of the Bonn Hussars, and if he has a sufficiency of money from his father or his father-in-law, the three magic letters frequently come of themselves, and place the born commoner on an equality with his noble competitors. I have sat on the same school-bench as many a son of a rich merchant or manufacturer, who began his career, not with serious study, but by entering a feudal corps, who pursued it by serving in an equally feudal cavalry regiment and ended up as the occupant of the highest political or military offices with the title of nobility or even that of *Freiherr*. Meanwhile, I myself had become too small for these gentry; they no longer recognised me on the street. They had lost the connection with what lay below; but that leading upwards they had quickly and surely secured, after the well-approved Prussian method.

This amalgamation of military qualifications with civil professional careers is also one side of Prussian militarism which recurs in no other country. I should like to see the Englishman, the Frenchman, the Russian or the Italian who derived the slightest profit in his professional political career from his rank in the reserve or in the territorial army. For this reason it cannot fail to strike us Prussians as very curious when Englishmen, as, for example, Bernard Shaw, speak of Junkers and militarists in their country. An English landed proprietor is not by a long way an agrarian from the East Elbe provinces; an English baronet is not a Prussian Junker; an English officer is not a Prussian militarist.

It is the spirit, the attitude of mind, the character that make the Prussian Junker. This narrow caste spirit, this brutally egotistical point of view, this hypocritical lack of character which covers their own profits with the cloak of loyalty and patriotism—these are what make the Prussian Junker and distinguish him from all similar figures in other countries.



## THE JUNKERS AND THE EUROPEAN WAR

Why have the Prussian Junkers and their comrades, who are so powerfully organised in the Pan-German Union, the Defence League, the Navy League, etc., endeavoured for years to provoke the great European war? It was because they saw that it would be to their advantage, and for no other reason. They realised that it would be to their material, ideal, political and social advantage.

Their material advantage! They swim in gold, or rather in bank-notes, since all the gold finds its way to the Imperial Bank. The normal prices of all their produce have risen by 100, 200, 300 per cent. While they are fattening, the people hunger. The longer the war lasts, the better for them. What could better suit the agrarians than isolation from foreign countries and England's "war of starvation"? No cattle, grain, vegetables, fat or butter can enter the country. So much the better, in that case, for them; so much the higher must be the price paid for their produce. That is what they think, although it is not what they say. They could not be Prussian Junkers if they did not bemoan the "enormous sacrifices" which they are called upon to make for the nourishment of the people, if they did not constantly prate of the invaluable services which they are daily rendering in connection with the nourishment and consequently the military resisting power of the German people. Services, yes—and well-paid, though of course they deny these. The cost of production has risen enormously (of course this is a lie, for the cheap labour of prisoners is put at their disposal in hundreds of thousands). On the other hand, they claim for themselves with a patriotic quiver in the voice and a pious upturning of the eyes, the moral service of having saved the nation from dying from hunger. The Prussian Minister for Agriculture, himself one of the greatest agrarians and one of the most biassed representatives of class interests,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Freiherr von Schorlemer, who has meanwhile died.



would be more appropriately called the "Minister against national economy," since he regards it as the task imposed upon him by God to protect most unjustly on every occasion the interests of the open country against the consumers.

The most outstanding characteristic of Prussian Junkerdom is, as I have already pointed out, not their greed of profit as such, but the shameless denial of their brutal selfishness. The agrarian taxes of Germany have been gradually pushed to a height which appeared even to a Bismarck, the founder of the new German customs policy, as an impossibility, as the product of the "most insane agrarian brain." As Germany is in normal times dependent on the import of grain from abroad, the taxes on grain naturally exercise their full effect in determining the price of grain produced in Germany and raise the price in Germany as compared with the price in the world-market by exactly the amount of the tax. Of this economically indisputable fact anyone may at any time be convinced by comparing the prices in the world-market for the main forms of grain as quoted in Holland with the prices current in Germany. Do you imagine that a German agrarian has ever admitted this artificial increase of price to the disadvantage of the bread-eating people? No Minister in Prussia or in the Empire has ever dared to speak even mildly against the selfishness of the agrarians, or to adduce evidence of their enrichment at the cost of the other classes of the population. Had anyone ventured to do so, he would not have remained a week longer in office. Never at any time has the effect of the grain taxes in raising prices been openly admitted in agrarian circles, or in the Prussian German Government which is under their control. When the German worker had to buy his bread at a cost of hundreds of millions of marks more than the workman on the other side of the German frontier, the blame was laid on the millers and bakers. The counter-question: "Why have you insisted so strongly on the introduction and the constant increase of the taxes on grain, if they did not exercise an effect in raising prices?" is one that has never been answered in the many long years in which Germany has been blessed with grain taxes. These people



credited the German Michel with a lack of logic from which they themselves in no way suffered. The agrarians themselves know quite well how many hundreds of millions of marks they have obtained year in, year out, from the grain taxes, the "love-gifts" (Liebesgaben) on brandy, the open and concealed premiums on exports, the taxes on cattle and meat, the prohibition of the import of foreign cattle, ostensibly based on reasons of public health. It is not a matter of millions but of many many milliards of marks that the labouring and consuming people have had to pay as tribute to the few thousand great and very great territorial magnates. (As is well known, the average peasant draws no advantage from the taxes and the preferential treatment, inasmuch as he has nothing to sell.)

But this expenditure of milliards in times of peace was not enough for the Junkers. It was necessary once more to bring about a great *coup* which would at a stroke put their finances right, and would again refurbish for some generations the tarnished glory of their weapons. In the quarter of a century of the Emperor William's reign, the state of trade and industry, despite all the preference shown to agrarianism, had developed to an extraordinary degree as a result of the gradual natural transformation of Germany from an agricultural State into a commercial and industrial State, without the support of expedients and crutches, without rewards or "love-gifts," but merely in consequence of the conspicuous efficiency, the perseverance and the skilful methods of our traders and manufacturers. The Emperor personally encouraged and supported this development; he entered into intimate relations with the leading men in the shipping world, in trade and industry, without inquiring as to their religion, their extraction or their political sentiments. The Emperor, the protector and promoter of our world trade, the founder of the German fleet coined the phrase: "Our future lies on the water"—a phrase which sounded ominously in the ears of the Prussian Junkers, for it was their wish that our future, as in bygone centuries in good old Prussia, should lie on the land, primarily on the inherited ancestral land of Prussian Junkerdom, the land lying east of the



Elbe. World trade, they feared and foresaw, could not but give rise to world ideas, to ideas of international understanding and of international peace which could flourish and prosper only on a democratic soil. World trade and world peace, international fraternisation and democracy—these were the fatal stages which Prussian Junkerdom foresaw, if the development of Prussian Germany continued to follow the same course as in recent decades. At all costs such a contingency had to be prevented: for that would be the grave, the downfall of the domination of the Prussian Junkers; that would mean the ascent of a new class in the nation, the creation of a new national spirit, which would have swept away once for all the predominance of the territorial nobility, of the military and official oligarchy. The merchant, the manufacturer, the intellectual and manual labourer must in no case be allowed so to rise in Prussia and in the Empire, and so to gain in political and social authority that the historically hallowed power of the Junkers and of those affiliated with them in the army and in officialdom should be diminished in consequence.

What means existed for the attainment of this end? Along the lines of peaceful development there were none. On the contrary, the longer the "enervating time of peace" lasted, the more were the labourers in the field of peace bound to gain in authority, to garner more and more the fruits of their useful labour, and in the end to transform these fruits into political and social power. Against this there was only one remedy; the peaceful development had to be interrupted and the trumpet sounded for war; if war once broke out, having regard to the existing obligations imposed by alliances, it could not fail to become a European war, which at a stroke would cut Germany off from world-trade and world-intercourse, and extinguish the vital spark of the accursed ideas of cosmopolitanism. Nothing but a war could again establish the Prussian soldierly spirit in the place of the ever widening "huckster spirit," and replace cosmopolitan insipidity and effeminacy by the old Prussian love of action and manly strength.



Ho, freedom calls ; come mount your steeds !  
 To battle, mount and away !  
 O, that is the place for manly deeds  
 Where strength still wins the day.<sup>1</sup>

Read the *Alldeutsche Blätter*, the speeches of the Pan-German generals and admirals ; read the nationalist chauvinistic Press of the last decade, the books and the addresses of the German Crown Prince ; read Bernhardt and his companions, and you will everywhere find unconcealed and undisguised the same train of thought : the German nation, they say, is in danger of sinking in effeminacy and materialism as a result of the everlasting pursuit of trade and of the making of money (the meaning always attached to materialism by our Junkers is, it should be observed, merely money-making by others). The old Prussian virtues of manliness and military strength, of recklessness and of joy in soldierly action, were more and more being lost ; physically and intellectually Prussia and Germany were doomed to destruction, unless they quickly, as quickly as possible, collected their strength for a renewed birth in the refreshing steel-bath of a " jolly war " :

For us too there will one day strike the great glad hour of battle. In days of anxious expectation, at first marked only by secret joy, there will then go from heart to heart and from mouth to mouth the old royal call to battle, " With God for King and Fatherland." In the streets, through which we march to-day in happy talk and laughter, there appears a paper still moist from the printing-press, and from the lips of the first German who reads it there break forth firmly and confidently the words : " Es braust ein Ruf wie Donnerhall." <sup>2</sup> The song is a true chorus of battle, and yet there sound jubilant in it the German's joy in war and in the hero's death. Its echo resounds into the furthest alleys with the exultant vow, " Wir wollen alle Hütersein." <sup>2</sup> Yes, that will be a great glad hour for which we may dare to long in secret. The loudly expressed desire for war too often becomes vain boasting and ridiculous rattling of the sabre. But the joy in war and the longing for it must remain still and deep

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<sup>1</sup> [Wohlauf, Kameraden, aufs Pferd, aufs Pferd !  
 Ins Feld, in die Freiheit gezogen !  
 Im Felde, da ist der Mann noch was wert,  
 Da wird seine Kraft noch gewogen.]

<sup>2</sup> [First and last lines of *Die Wacht am Rhein*].



in the German heart, because we have enemies enough, and victory is only for a people which, with song and music, goes into war as into a festival. . . . With all our power then let us laugh away those old women in trousers who fear war and go about complaining that it is horrible, hateful. No, war is beautiful. Its majestic greatness lifts the human heart high above what is earthly and trivial. . . .

Such hours are awaiting us also. We will advance to meet them with the manly knowledge that it is fairer and more glorious, after the echo of these days has died away, to live for ever on the tablet of heroes in the church than to die namelessly in the comfort of bed. . . . Up in the clouds sit "hero Friedrich, hero Blücher, the men of action." But not the recluses who would turn us against war.

This invitation to a murderous war, which appeared in the *Wochenschrift für Deutschlands Jugend*, was addressed by Otto von Gottberg to the League of Young Germany and to the German gymnasia on January 25th, 1913, that is to say, a year and a half before the war.<sup>1</sup> It is one of the hundreds and thousands of voices from the same camp which, in the same sense and the same rhythm, sing the praise of war as such, quite regardless of the cause or the purpose for which it is waged.

I have elsewhere collected a series of such Prussian war sentiments which provide a brilliant posthumous justification for the words of Herwegh :

Why let their wiles be still prevailing,  
Till—ah too late !—you realise  
To guard the Rhine is unavailing ;—  
Upon the Spree the true foe lies.<sup>2</sup>

To the loudest herald of war "for the sake of war," the German Crown Prince, I have already accorded in my book<sup>3</sup> the appreciation due to his high and influential position. Even at a time when there was no mention of Germany being fallen upon and attacked, war as such, as the embodiment of a manly joy in fighting, was to his Hohenzollern heart with its love of action an object ardently to be desired—an object of yearning such as is

<sup>1</sup> Quoted from Nippold, *German Chauvinism*, page 1.

<sup>2</sup> [Wie Kinder lasst Ihr Euch betrügen  
Bis Ihr zu spät erkannt, O weh,  
Die Wacht am Rhein wird nicht genügen,  
Der wahre Feind steht an der Spree.]

<sup>3</sup> *J'accuse*, page 68.



for us simple men the maintenance of peace among the nations. The address of the princely army-leader to his troops on the occasion of the first anniversary of the outbreak of war: "Into war as we love it!"—this ebullition of the most criminal war-madness of a Field Marshal, safely screened behind the front, I have already stigmatised in an earlier chapter of this work.

Let us here refer to a small incident in amplification of the character of the future German Emperor—the future Emperor, that is to say, unless the German people finally and completely liberates itself from this Hohenzollern Empire, its worst enemy.

On the occasion of the thirty-fifth birthday of the German Crown Prince, in the beginning of May, 1917, the following interchange of telegrams took place between the victor of Longwy and the Oberbürgermeister of Berlin, the retired Minister of State, Wermuth:

I have just inspected my brave regiments, Numbers 64 and 24, who have just come out of the trenches. Of the 400 men or so with whom I personally spoke, the greater part came from Berlin and the neighbourhood. In spite of their great exertions, the heavy fire they had endured for weeks and their considerable losses, the demeanour of these Berlin lads (*Jungens*) was excellent. They had in no way lost their good temper and their readiness for action. With such troops as these we could fetch the devil from Hell. Best wishes.—WILHELM, Crown Prince.

With joyful pride and thankfulness Berlin hears the praise of its brave lads from the mouth of their army leader, the Crown Prince. Conscious of their strength and their duty, with their fathers' inheritance, a sound sense of humour, in their knapsack, this kind does not go under, outwardly or inwardly, despite all privations. They will certainly help their leaders to dispatch the work. "May God and cold iron prevail."—Oberbürgermeister WERMUTH.

In this smart exchange of telegrams between the Emperor's young son and the aged Bürgermeister, with its flavour of students' slang, there is reflected the most appalling battle that has ever defiled our unfortunate planet in the history of mankind. The subject referred to in the telegrams is the Anglo-French spring offensive of 1917 executed with gigantic forces. Countless thousands of German sons, brothers and fathers were lacerated, torn,



maimed and blinded, delivered over to madness or imprisonment. All the accounts of the war-correspondents, which in addition were toned down by the censor, present to us pictures of horror, for which—according to the reporters' own confession—there is no adequate expression in human language. A vast stream of misery and despair flowed from these French battlefields into untold German families. Many thousands of mothers moan for their slaughtered sons; many thousands of orphaned and starving children cry aloud for their fathers who will come no more. Many thousands of care-worn women vainly stretch out their hands to press once more to their breast, if only in thought, their dear ones now lying in alien soil. All this, however, all this immeasurable tale of human unhappiness which this frivolous, cold-blooded, carefully-devised Hohenzollern war of conquest has brought upon the world and upon their own countrymen—all this is neither seen nor observed by the everlastingly smiling Imperial Prince in the becoming Hussar uniform. For him it is only the light side of the medal that exists. What lies behind the surface, all the horror, terror and death is ignored; according to recently published statistics of the "Middle European" Naumann, who certainly would rather understate the figures, Germany left 1,330,000 dead on the field in the first two and a half years of war, but this in the eyes of the Imperial Prince amounts merely to "considerable losses." With these two colourless words this side of the situation is completely disposed of for the august gentleman.

With satisfaction he records the fact that he has personally spoken to 400 men after the battle—think what a gigantic achievement!—he glorifies the "excellent demeanour of these Berlin lads," their "good humour, their readiness for action," and he effectively concludes by defying the devil, who could be fetched from Hell with such troops as these.

After such a bloody butchery this is all that strikes and flows from the pen of this youthful plunger from behind the front. He neither sees, nor wants to see, the mountains of bodies, the endless trains of the wounded and the maimed. He inspects those who have been fortunate



enough to come back, who, glad that they have for this time escaped the butchery, meet their high commander with friendly looks. *Ave Cæsar, morituri te salutant!* "Berlin lads" is what this Berlin lad calls old bearded fathers of families, men of the Landwehr and the Landsturm who had to work hard and earn their bread when the young Imperial scion was still in swaddling clothes or when he was still learning the alphabet, in short trousers. This Christian Prince, by the grace of God, proposes to fetch the devil from Hell with such troops! With what pride must his journalistic heart have beaten when he discovered this fine phrase to give an effective ending to his telegram.

Yet even this princely conjuration of the devil is not distinguished for originality. The younger brother of the Crown Prince, His Royal Highness Prince Oscar, had already exclaimed in words of proud astonishment to the royal grenadiers whom he commanded in the autumn of 1914 (before he had permanently to withdraw behind the front on account of an affection of the heart): "With these Grenadiers and with the 154th we could take Hell by storm." That was on the evening of that memorable day of battle regarding which the official *Jauersche Tageblatt* of October 18th, 1914, under the title *A Day of Honour for our Regiment*, reported imperishable acts of heroism against fallen and wounded enemies:

And we will give them no quarter. . . . Here the red trousers dead or wounded lie in a heap on the ground. We knock down or bayonet the wounded, for we know that those scoundrels fire at our backs when we have gone by. There was a Frenchman there stretched out, full length, face down, pretending to be dead. A kick from a strong fusilier soon taught him that we were there. Turning round, he asked for quarter, but we answered: "Is that the way your tools work, you ——" and he was nailed to the ground. . . . At the entry into the screen of branches they lay groaning and crying for quarter, but whether wounded slightly or severely, the brave fusiliers spare their country the cost of caring for many enemies. . . .<sup>1</sup>

This is the plastic-drastic account of the non-commissioned officer Klemt, who took part in the battle, as it

<sup>1</sup> See the full report in *J'accuse*, pages 361-2.



was published at the time in the Jauer local paper ; these are the incidents which inspired Prince Oscar, the then commander of the regiment, to a conjuration of the devil, similar to that which has to-day flowed from the brilliant pen of his elder brother.

But even the Imperial Father is not missing in the chorus of the high-born singers of war. The reader will recall his famous telegram to his daughter-in-law, the wife of the "hero of Longwy," that bombastic telegram in the first victorious days, when the German armies, advancing like a whirlwind through Belgium and France, overcame all resistance and appeared to lay the whole world at the feet of the proud Supreme Commander, and the even prouder Hohenzollern father :

Cordial thanks, my dear child. I rejoice with you over William's first victory. How nobly has God stood by his side. To Him be the thanks and the honour. I have bestowed upon him the Iron Cross of the second and first class. Oscar, I hear, has also fought brilliantly with his grenadiers. He has received the Iron Cross of the second class. Tell Ina-Marie. May God continue to protect and help the lads, and may He be with you and all women.—PAPA WILHELM.

The "Oscar who had fought so brilliantly with his grenadiers" is the same Oscar who wanted to storm Hell with the 154th. While, as will be observed, the sons by preference speak of Hell, the father turns exclusively to Heaven, in order in this way to gain both powers—the powers of good and of evil—for the cause of the Hohenzollerns. Indeed he goes so far as to attempt to bring God to his side by personal corruption, inasmuch as at the very outset of the war—as will be gathered from the text of the preceding telegram—he lavishes upon him not merely thanks and honour, but also the iron cross of the first and second class.

Thus the fortunate Hohenzollerns are well provided on every side. In Heaven they can lack nothing, but Hell also cannot prevail against them. They simply take it by storm—for what purpose do they have storming troops?—and fetch the devil out. There is only one modest question which I should like to address to the exalted princes. If it is so easy to overcome Hell, why do they not themselves go and



fetch the devil ? Why do they send others in their place ? Presumably because it does not appear to them to be so entirely secure in Hell as they like to make it appear in their telegrams—because perhaps they fear that instead of fetching the devil, they might themselves be fetched by him. It is at any rate a comfortable practice to issue murderous commands from the security of headquarters, to send brave telegrams into the world, to dispatch the “splendid Berlin lads” into Hell, while the hero himself, in some coquettish French castle, well-tended and well-guarded, enjoys the sleep of Heaven. Prudence, which is the better part of valour, is also a comfortable virtue, and in this respect the hero of Longwy has certainly so far not been found wanting.

What, however, are we to say of the old Minister of State, of the Oberbürgermeister of the Capital of the Empire, who with submissive enthusiasm falls in with the repulsive, snarling tone of the dapper officer of Hussars, who speaks of the sound sense of humour of these candidates for death, of the humour which is nothing else than gallows-humour, than the submissive resignation in the inevitable stroke of destiny which may reach one hapless man to-day and another to-morrow ? What are we to say of the highest civil official of the capital of the Empire, who calls the labour of murder a “work” which the brave lads will “dispatch” with their leaders ? It is certainly praiseworthy that the Prince on this godless occasion left God out of the play. But this gap is filled by the Oberbürgermeister : “May God and cold iron prevail !” With this blasphemous dragging of God into the devil’s work, the Bürgermeister of Berlin concludes his telegram, as effectively as the Imperial Prince.

Where else in the world of to-day, I ask, is such a thing possible ? Where else in other countries in the twentieth century has enthusiasm for slaughter, merely for the sake of slaughter, been manifested—an enthusiasm which beyond all the corpses and the ruins sees only their own glory in war, only their own military ambition, which sees only the crown of laurel, but not the blood that cleaves to it ? That is Prussianism ! That is Hohenzollernism *pur sang* ! That is the spirit which, with those whom it inspires, must



be extirpated root and branch, if the world is again to have rest.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is this military spirit, which speaks in all the words and the actions of the Hohenzollerns, of the living as well as of past generations, it is this bellicose spirit which has given rise to the present catastrophe and must inevitably occasion new similar catastrophes—it is this anachronism in the modern world of ideas to which the present enemies of Germany wish to put an end once for all. It is the defeat of this which they wish to compass ; it is this they desire to render harmless for all time.

“ Into war as we love it ! ” This criminally presumptuous phrase of a scion of the Hohenzollerns, incurably afflicted with the madness of war, must and shall be, for the German people in the first place, and if they are unable to gather their strength for a manly action, then for the whole world, a finger-post pointing from the darkness of the present to a brighter and better future. Into war *against* war ! Into war against the eternally incorrigible glorifiers of war ! It is not merely from the many coloured standards of Germany’s enemies, but from the red flag of the inevitable German Revolution also, that this saying must shine against the guilty when the day of the great reckoning approaches. It should be branded on all the unpretentious wooden crosses which adorn the graves of millions and millions of slaughtered men. It should stand written in letters of iron on the ruins of all the hundreds and thousands of peaceful villages and towns which the fire of war has consumed.

And when one day—as the avenger of murdered generations, as the bearer of salvation for those to come—the great machine which is called after its French inventor begins its work as it did four generations ago, then again on the place of execution the saying of the German Crown Prince will be honoured—though with the emphasis differently placed : “ This is war, as *we* love it ! ”



### THE MEANING AND THE OBJECT OF THE WAR (ACCORDING TO BETHMANN).

In his speech of April 5th, 1916, Herr von Bethmann defined as follows the meaning and the object of this war :

The meaning and the object of this war is for us to create a Germany, so firmly knit together, so strongly protected, that no one will again be tempted to wish our destruction, that everyone in the whole world will be compelled to recognise our right to exercise our peaceful strength. It is this Germany, and not the annihilation of foreign nations; that we wish to attain. And therein, at the same time, lies the salvation of the European continent which is shaken to its foundations. What can the enemy coalition offer to Europe ? Russia, the fate of Poland and Finland ; France, the claim to hegemony, which once was our misery ; England, that state of dissension, of enduring irritability which it likes to call the equilibrium on the European continent, and which is the ultimate and deepest cause of all the woe that has come upon Europe and upon the world in this war. Had the three Powers not united against us, had they not attempted to turn back the wheel of history to times that have for ever gone, then the peace of Europe would gradually have become confirmed by the forces of quiet development. The attainment of this was the aim of German policy before the war. What we wanted could have been ours by peaceful labour. The enemies chose war (Exclamation of the deputy Liebknecht : " You chose war.")

Liebknecht's three words hit the nail on the head. Like a leaven they decompose the hotchpotch of the Chancellor's prolix speech which, with all its words, contains little substance and less truth. The meaning of the Chancellor's words are briefly : We wanted to live and labour in peace ; it was you who united to annihilate us ; now we want so strong a Germany that such an attempt cannot again be undertaken ; we reject the principle of the balance of power on the European continent " the ultimate and deepest cause of all the woe," and in its place we wish to establish an ascendancy of Germany—of course " without annihilating or violating foreign nations." " Your purse or your life " cries the highway-robber to the wanderer at whose neck he springs. That, however, is not by any means an act of violation. It is a peace proposal, and he who refuses it, is responsible for further bloodshed. The wanderer who refuses his purse, being already half throttled, must be held responsible if he is strangled to death.



It is difficult to recognise what the other phrases of the Chancellor are meant to convey. What is meant by saying that Russia offers the rest of Europe the fate of Poland and Finland? What are we to understand by this, when said by the German Chancellor? Is the fate of the Prussian Poles and Finns any worse than that of the Prussian Poles and Danes, or the German subjects in Alsace-Lorraine. This was true even in the past under the late rule of the Tsars. To-day, after the liberation of Russia, these sentences of the Chancellor have completely lost all meaning. To-day there are certainly oppressed nationalities in Prussia and Germany, but there are no longer any in Russia.

What, further, is the meaning of the statement that France offers to the rest of Europe the claim to hegemony which was our misery? Since the fall of Napoleon III, where, when, and how has France given expression to efforts to establish a hegemony? The peculiar feature of the present-day world position is precisely this, that the Hohenzollerns have taken the place of the Napoleons, that they wish to play the fatal rôle, and to play it more and more in future, as a result of which the Europe of Napoleon was for decades plunged into bitter wars and unceasing unrest. The idea of creating enduring tranquillity for the whole of the continent by the predominance of a single State is a truly Napoleonic, a Cæsarean idea, and the public opinion of the whole world is on the right path when it ascribes to the Hohenzollerns and their adherents, despite all denials on their side, plans to dominate the world. But how does the Chancellor come to attribute efforts to establish a hegemony in Europe to the French civil republic, which drove out the last Cæsar and has rigorously suppressed Cæsarean ambitions in her fold (see Boulanger)?

And what, according to the prediction of the Chancellor, is the unfortunate destiny to be apprehended for Europe from a victorious England? "The state of enduring irritability which England likes to call the equilibrium on the European Continent." Well, well, what does this mean? Was it not England that wanted at the Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 to replace this dangerous



system of equilibrium by a European organisation resting on law? Was it not just as a result of the opposition offered by Germany to any idea of organisation that the formation of the two groups of Powers constantly became more close, more dangerous, and more burdensome for all the nations? On the occasion of the Anglo-German negotiation for an understanding in 1912 which side took the first step towards building a bridge between the Triple Entente and the Triple Alliance, and in this way removing any danger of war between the two groups? Who was it who intimated their readiness to give the famous guarantee that neither England nor any of her friends in the Entente intended or ever would intend to carry out an attack upon Germany? At the last most critical moment before the outbreak of war which of the parties was it, England or Germany, that again offered in the most earnest and moving manner to give this guarantee, and thus to take this first and most important step to a settlement of the antagonisms existing between the two groups, and consequently to the creation of a European community of States?<sup>1</sup> Who then is responsible if the "state of enduring irritability" in Europe has not only continued to exist, but has been constantly rendered more acute? Who is responsible if in the summer of 1914 this situation led to the long dreaded catastrophe; is it England or Germany? It is in contradiction with historical truth to hold England responsible for the consequences of the system of the balance of power in the past. It is, however, even more in contradiction with historical truth to suggest that the leading men of England intend in future merely to return to the system of the European balance of power.

In how far, in more remote periods of history, English diplomacy saw its salvation in the beam of the continental balance, and only felt itself secure on the European tight rope with the aid of this beam is not the question now under discussion. There are historical inquiries, which we may leave to the chauvinistic writers of history in Germany who delight to ride about on this hobby horse. If in former periods of history the playing off of the various continental

<sup>1</sup> Blue Book, No. 101. See *J'accuse*, pages 101, 186, and the earlier chapters of this work.



Powers against each other, under the formula of the European balance of power, may have been a favourite instrument in English diplomatic skill, this charge at any rate does not apply to our epoch of history and to English policy in recent decades. The formation of the Triple Entente was merely an expedient, and not an end of English policy—an expedient to meet the dangers which were feared from a Germany that was continually becoming more powerful, more presumptuous and more assertive in its self-glory. Had Germany revealed herself as well disposed to the idea of an union of all the great Powers on the basis of international law, England would never have thought of confronting the Triple Alliance with the Triple Entente.

Even if one refuses to recognise the causal connection, it is at least impossible to deny the sequence in time. The Triple Alliance had the priority; the Triple Entente followed it. Even after the failure of the Hague Conferences—the failure, that is to say, in their most important ideals—England did everything to bridge over the dangerous antagonism between the groups of the European Powers, and thus put an end to the system of the balance of power. In any case, the English Liberal Government which assumed office in 1905 has never come forward as the unconditional champion of the system of equilibrium, but has on the contrary always appeared as the adherent of the system of European community. Throughout the whole period of his tenure of office the Chancellor had rejected the idea of a united Europe and he even did so as late as July 31st, 1914, when he ignored Grey's peace proposal; yet now he reproaches his English colleague with desiring to re-establish anew in Europe the condition of "enduring irritability" which is identical with the system of the balance of power! No, Herr von Bethmann, the position is quite the other way round. The statements of your English colleague which furnish the answer to your speech, exclude every possibility of doubt. England wants to bring about a perpetual European peace in the only way in which this is possible, by asserting the equality of rights and of duties of all European States, the great as well as the small, the powerful as well as the weak. Germany, however, is striving for a position of hegemony



which it tricks out with the fair name of the "security of her future"—a position of power, resting on the conquest and the suppression of other nations. Even if the plans of the German despots were only in part realised, a graver unrest and irritability than before would be inevitable, and, as a consequence, new and even more bitter conflicts would arise.

The "salvation of the European continent," which is shaken to its foundations, cannot be achieved by Bethmann's remedy, but only by Asquith's; and now that the two statesmen have distinctly expressed themselves regarding the aims on both sides, it is truer than ever that the Entente Powers are struggling for peace and progress, the Central Powers for war and retrogression.

#### GERMAN PEACE—EUROPEAN PEACE

Germany is striving for a German peace—Germany's enemies for a European peace.

Under the pretext of having to guard herself against future attacks, Germany is striving for a gigantic increase of her power, first of all on the European continent, and, if things go well, at a later date on other continents also. Her territorial and economic power is to be extended in the East and West over wide territories, which on an approximate estimate cannot fall much short of the superficial area of the present kingdom of Prussia. The retention of new territories, forcibly incorporated in the German Empire against the will of Europe and against the desire of the indigenous population, would of course demand for its execution an even higher degree of military preparation than was at the disposal of the German Empire before the war. Even the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine brought about the struggle of armaments between France and Germany, and as a consequence, the everlasting unrest and danger of war in Europe. What armaments would be required to retain the Russian Baltic provinces which are now to be acquired, to keep Poland and Belgium as constituent parts or as adjuncts of the German Empire? Even if one were to accept the one-sided standpoint of the leaders of the German State, and strive with them for



a German peace guaranteeing Germany's interests and power, one would be constrained to exclaim to them : The peace, which you want to have, does not increase your power and security ; it lessens them. Within your old frontiers you are better protected against any attack against "lust of conquest, lust of revenge and the jealousy of your neighbours"—to use the Chancellor's words—than you would be within the new frontiers which you wish to create in subjecting forcibly to the power of your sword free and independent nations, who do not even speak your language, who are not even of your race. Even the crassest national egotism must deter you from your plans of conquest.

True and obvious as all this is, it is certainly preached to deaf ears in German countries. At the moment when these sentences are written (spring, 1917), feeling in Germany is still through and through annexationist, it is still entirely anti-pacifist. Of the 397 representatives in the German Reichstag, it is possible to count on at least two-thirds belonging more or less strictly to the annexationists. The electors represented by them also comprise approximately two-thirds of the entire electorate of 1912.<sup>1</sup> That the German princes and their Governments—the Emperor at their head—are without exception striving only for a

<sup>1</sup> It is by no means impossible that, according to the course taken by military events, the annexationist plans, in the first place of the majority in the Reichstag and finally of the Government, the army leaders, and of the princes, may gradually diminish or may even in the end completely disappear. Whether, and if so when, this desirable development will take place cannot yet be foreseen at the moment when these lines are being written. It appears for this reason all the more important to demonstrate the annexationist views which prevailed in Germany during the first years of the war. It is clear that any changes that may supervene later are in no way voluntary actions, but arise solely from a changed military situation rendering it impossible to carry out these former plans of conquest. The enforced abandonment of a German peace resting on violence in no way removes the grave offence involved in the original advancement of such an aim. The enforced departure from a wrong path merely confirms the fact that one has hitherto been pursuing the wrong path. The German aims of conquest have hitherto excluded any idea of peace negotiations, and therefore, even if they should later on be more or less abandoned, they are responsible for the prolongation of the war far into its third year.



German "peace of security," that is to say a peace resting on conquest, requires no further proof in view of all they have said and of their whole train of thought, which has long been familiar. I have cited a series of facts in support of this ; others may be read in Grumbach's book *Germany's Annexationist Aims*, which I have mentioned on several occasions. The generals and admirals who possess the ear of the Emperor, who in virtue of their military successes are also honoured as oracles by the people, all assume as a matter of course, as indeed their profession makes inevitable, the standpoint of the strategic improvement of the German frontiers. In this way they here join forces with the Pan-Germans and the Imperialists, who on national and economic grounds are striving for a "greater Germany."

Significant in this connection is an exchange of telegrams, which, as the newspapers agree in reporting, took place in May, 1917, between the "Independent Committee for a German Peace" under the Presidency of Professor Dr. Dietrich Schäfer and Field Marshal von Hindenburg. The Danzig branch of the Committee in question—which, as is well known, represents the extreme annexationist theories—had again demanded in a meeting attended by hundreds of members : "The destruction of the enemies' military resources, an appropriate war indemnity, the maintenance of political, military and economic supremacy in Belgium and Poland, the restoration and extension of our colonial possessions, the acquisition of the mining regions of Briey and Longwy, as well as fertile lands for settlement in the East." In connection with this meeting an address of homage was addressed to the Field Marshal, in which expression was given to the confident hope of "a peace of security corresponding to the sacrifices which have been made and guarantecing the assured future of the Fatherland."

The answer of the Field Marshal to this telegram of homage ran as follows :

I heartily thank those present at the meeting in Danzig for their kind thoughts. With them, I firmly hope for the fulfilment of their wishes for the Fatherland's future.—V. HINDENBURG.



To anyone who knows Prussian-German conditions, this interchange of telegrams says nothing new. Hindenburg, like all the army leaders, assumes entirely the annexationist point of view, and as we see once more on this occasion, does not hesitate to support the extremest hyper-annexationists by his open concurrence. These dangerous tendencies of the military counsellors of the Emperor, approved and shared by the monarch himself, are so firmly rooted that they are only to be removed by the impossibility of their execution. So long as the Prussian generals have the least hope of being able to attain their strategic "aim of security," so long will they prefer to sacrifice further hundreds of thousands of their countrymen and to spend on the war further hundreds of milliards of marks, rather than give up so much as a square metre of their plans of conquest.

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Thus Herr von Bethmann is essentially no more than the speaking-trumpet, the responsible organ of those persons and classes who decide the fate of Germany. The "nationals" produce the music and the Chancellor is merely the sounding-board which emits their notes throughout the world. The charge which his opponents, the ultra-annexationists, bring against him is merely that he refuses to transmit their crassest dissonances. He would be prepared to do even this, but for the fact that he realises the hopelessness of these "boundless" aims of conquest. In principle he could offer no objection to their proposals; for he who has once adopted the standpoint of the conqueror's peace and the guarantee of power must, in the nature of things, be inspired by the desire to carry home as much booty as possible from the system of organised robbery and murder. That Herr von Bethmann is annexationist, or that he is too annexationist, is a charge which no one has yet levelled against him in Germany, apart from the Socialists on the left and a few civil Liberal publicists. The charge which his opponents on the right are constantly bringing against him is merely that he is not sufficiently annexationist, and



it is this that may perhaps in the end occasion his downfall.<sup>1</sup>

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The restricted nationalist circle of ideas which inspires the leading German statesman is confronted on the other side, in the leaders of the Entente Powers, by the international pacifist recognition of the fact that it is only by the organisation of Europe, by a system resting on international law, as Asquith expressed it, that the security of all States alike can be guaranteed, and that future wars can be prevented.

The aim of the Entente Powers is an order of law, an organisation of the nations in place of the former international anarchy, and arising from this a treaty agreement regarding a proportionate restriction of armaments—in a word, Pacifism become a reality.

The aim of Germany is a continuance and an indefinite increase of militarism; it is a new European order resting on violence, more uncertain and more baneful than the old, since the inflammatory material in the latter case was merely Alsace-Lorraine, whereas in the new situation Belgium, Poland, Livonia, Courland, etc., must together constitute a constant danger of an outbreak of war.

The war-aim of the Entente Powers, as must be recognised by every enlightened European and even by those Germans who lay claim to this description, represents an epoch-making advance in the development of the national life of Europe; the war-aims of Germany, on the other hand, represent the most appalling step backwards, the beginning of the end of Europe.

### THE NEW QUESTION OF GUILT

To-day when the pros and the cons have been fully discussed on every side in the years of war that are passed, when all the parties have produced the documentary evidence which could serve for their own exoneration and the incrimination of their enemies, the question of the responsibility for the origin of the war may well be

<sup>1</sup> This prediction was, as we know, fulfilled in July, 1917.



described as finally decided—decided by the moral tribunal of the world.

A new question of guilt, however, now emerges and requires an independent decision. It must not by any means be assumed that the party who is guilty of the outbreak of a war is also responsible for every stage of its continuance. The criminal may obliterate or weaken the consequences of his misdeed; in such cases the criminal code grants acquittal or a minor punishment. In the same way, the European war-criminals might plead, if not for acquittal, at least for a milder form of punishment, if they succeeded in proving that they wished to shorten the war which they had evoked, but that their enemies without reason insisted on its continuance.

*Without reason*—that is the point. If in any of his speeches Herr von Bethmann had offered a peace such as I have outlined in an earlier passage, a peace renouncing every annexation or other violation of other nations, recognising the oppressed nations' right of self-determination, a peace on the basis of a community of nations organised on law—if Herr von Bethmann had made such a peace proposal and his opponents had refused to discuss peace on such a basis, then the question "Who is responsible for the continuation of the war?" would have assumed an entirely different aspect from what it has to-day.

I have elsewhere referred to the formal criterion according to which, on Socialist and Pacifist principles, it is necessary to answer the question: "Who is the aggressor, and who is the defender in a war?"

The defender is he who has proposed to obtain a decision of the dispute by arbitration; the aggressor is he who has rejected this proposal.

On similar principles, it is possible and necessary to decide the question: "Who is guilty of the continuation of a war?" He who offers a peace on the basis of a *restitutio in integrum*, compensation for the injury that has been suffered, the free right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination, the establishment of legal and effective guarantees against future wars—he who offers such a peace, even if he were the original breaker of the



peace, is innocent of the continuation of the war. He who refuses peace-negotiations on such a basis is responsible for the continuance of the war.

\* \* \* \* \*

It is from this point of view that the peace conditions of the Chancellor, as announced on April 5th, 1916, are to be judged and condemned.<sup>1</sup>

In his speech Herr von Bethmann depicted the following hypothetical incident:

“Yes, Gentlemen, let us suppose that I proposed to Mr. Asquith to sit beside me at a table to negotiate regarding the possibility of a peace, and that Mr. Asquith began by demanding the final and complete destruction of Prussia’s power—the conversation would be at an end before it had begun. To such peace conditions there remains only one answer, and that answer is given by our sword.”

Herr von Bethmann’s pessimism is entirely justified. As things are to-day, I also regard any conversation between the two Ministers with the same hopelessness as the German Chancellor. My despondency, however, is based not on the attitude of the Englishman, but on that of the German:

Let us suppose—I might say, inverting Bethmann’s hypothesis—that Mr. Asquith proposed to the German Chancellor to negotiate with him regarding the possibility of peace, and that Herr von Bethmann began by demanding that Russia from the Baltic Sea to the Volhynian marshes should be annexed

<sup>1</sup> I think it desirable to point out once again that the chapter “Comments on the Chancellor’s Speech of April 5th, 1916,” was written shortly after that speech, and was later amplified by a number of additions. In its main lines it is, therefore, based on the situation as it then existed in the spring of 1916. The later changes in the leading German statesman, first of all to a “pacifist” (November, 1916), then to an “offerer of peace” (December, 1916), from which he may perhaps become in the end a “pleader for peace”—these later changes, which I discuss in the concluding chapters of the section, in no way modify the fundamental points indicated by me.



and that the same fate should befall the Flemish parts of Belgium, that the remaining part of Belgium should be made dependent on Germany in a political, military and economic respect ; suppose further that an organisation of Europe on a basis of law should be declined—if Herr von Bethmann should so speak “the conversation would be at an end before it had begun.”

The demands here advanced by the German Chancellor are, unfortunately, a reality. The demands which Herr von Bethmann places in the mouth of his English colleague are mere fiction and are refuted by the concise statements of the English Minister.

Which, then, is making peace impossible ? Who is responsible for the continuance of the war ? . . .



## CHAPTER II

### BETHMANN, THE "PACIFIST" <sup>1</sup>

ON October 23rd, 1916, Sir Edward Grey delivered an important speech to the representatives of the Foreign Press in London on the causes of the war and the war-aims of the various groups of power.

The English Foreign Secretary rightly emphasised the close connection existing between the war-aims and the origin of the war; the extension of power and the guarantees which Germany has openly proclaimed as her war-aim have always been based on the false assertion that Germany was attacked by the Entente Powers in the summer of 1914, and that she was under an obligation to protect herself against new acts of aggression in future. Grey recapitulated the familiar facts from the twelve critical days, from which it appeared that Germany was not the party attacked, but was on the contrary the aggressor. He desired the decision of an independent and impartial tribunal, of a world jury as I have called it elsewhere, and he expressed his conviction that such a tribunal on the ground of the existing proved facts could arrive only at a verdict of guilty against Germany.

So far as war-aims are concerned, this verdict, however, would lead to the conclusion that it is not Germany, but the rest of the world, that must secure for itself future guarantees against similar attacks.

For years before this war we were living under the deepening shadow of Prussian militarism. . . . There must be no peace except peace which is going to ensure that the nations of Europe

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<sup>1</sup> This essay, written in November, 1916, was published in two instalments, in December, 1916, and January, 1917, in the magazine *Wissen und Leben* (Zürich, Orell Füssli).



live in the future free from that shadow, in the open air and in the light of freedom. For that we are contending.

In agreement with Asquith, the Prime Minister, the English Minister defines the war-aims of the Entente Powers as follows :

Yet it was because we knew how terrible a thing war would be that we tried to avoid it in 1914. After we have had this terrible experience, our Allies and ourselves are determined that the war shall not end till we can be sure, at any rate, that the generations which come after us and our nations in future are not to be subjected to such a terrible trial again. . . . We shall fight until we have established supremacy of right over force, free development under equal conditions, and each in accordance with its own genius, of all States, great and small, which build up the family of civilised mankind.

Grey in eloquent words appeals, not only to the Allies of England, who according to the utterances of their leading statesmen, are pursuing the same aim as Great Britain, but more particularly to the neutrals as well, and primarily to the United States of America, to play their part in this organisation of a future peace.

The best work that neutrals can do for the moment is to work up an opinion for such an agreement between nations as will prevent a war like this from happening again. If nations had been united in such an agreement, and prompt and resolute to insist in July, 1914, that the dispute must be referred to a conference or to The Hague, and that the Belgian Treaty must be observed, there would have been no war. . . .

In the United States a league has already sprung up, supported by various distinguished people, with the object, not of interfering with belligerents in this war, but of getting ready for some international association, after this war is over, which shall do its part in making peace secure in future. . . . We say to neutrals who are occupying themselves with this question that we are in favour of it. But we shall have to ask when the time comes for them to make any demand on us for such a thing : "Will you play up when the time comes." The object of this league is to insist upon treaties being kept and some other settlement being tried before resort to war. In July, 1914, there was no such league in existence. Supposing a generation hence such a condition of things as in July, 1914, recurs and there is such a league in existence, it may, and it ought to, keep the peace. Everything will depend upon whether the national sentiment behind it is so penetrated by the lessons of this war as to feel that in the future each nation, although not immediately concerned in this dispute, is yet interested, and vitally interested, in doing something, even if it be by force, to keep the peace.



In these statements of the English statesman we again find described in unambiguous language the war-aims of the Entente Powers. It is exactly the same as that described in *J'accuse* in the words :

A covenant of peace between free nations based on a mutual recognition of their rights and on mutual confidence, a federation of free States, a *foedus pacificum* as Kant calls it.

It is in particular to be observed that what the English pacifist Minister has in mind is in no way merely a league of those Powers who are at present the allied enemies of Germany and Austria, but a world-wide league of peace, including the Neutral Powers—a league which will not merely be pledged by written treaties to the maintenance of peace throughout the world, but will also be resolute for action at the appropriate hour. With this programme for the future put forward by the English Government we not merely approach more and more closely to the pacifist organisation of civilised mankind, but we have already begun to discuss ways and means whereby in a given case practical effect can and should be given to this principle. Grey's appeal for action, when the moment for action has come, opens up all the large number of ways which Pacifists and Socialists in their speeches and writings have proposed for the purpose of transforming into action the will to maintain peace. I need not here enter in detail into all these proposals ; it is sufficient to indicate that, even without the necessity of meeting the force of the individual violator of peace with the counter-force of the peace organisation, the complete commercial and industrial boycott of the peace-breaking State, the boycott in intercourse and in intellectual matters, would suffice to restrain it from its criminal intent. If the world-wide league of peace, after investigation into the question in the prescribed manner, declares by its duly established organs which of the contending States wanted peace, and which was the disturber of the peace who had made war inevitable, and if the guilty State and its inhabitants are thereupon outlawed by the civilised world united in the league of peace, cut off from all spiritual and cultural relations with the



rest of the world, and exposed to material ruin and to moral damnation, such a result would constitute so severe, so annihilating a punishment that the mere threat would curb the most criminal intention within the restraint of law. All these possibilities of not merely founding a peace league but of making it energetic and effective are indicated by the English statesman when he appeals to the neutrals, and in particular to America, to co-operate with the Allies of England in a common organisation of peace in the future. Admission to this peace organisation will, as a matter of course, be open also to the present enemies of England, to Germany, Austria and their Allies. They also must once for all renounce the principle that might takes precedence of right; they also must enter the organisation of peace as members with equal rights and equal obligations. If, however, as there are reasons for apprehending from their past and from the war-aims they have hitherto proclaimed, they should decline to do so, the military, economic and moral power of the world league of peace must restrain them in future from the continuation of their policy of violence.

This is the significant meaning of the last speech of the English Minister. This is the peace programme of the Entente Powers to which no friend of human progress can fail to subscribe. At the same time, however, it furnishes the strongest condemnation of the former German policy in the matter of the war and of war-aims, since this policy has not merely prepared the combustible material for the world conflagration, and laid the match to the powder barrel, but also by putting forward the war-aims hitherto made public, by ignoring or falsifying the aims of the enemy, it is responsible for the continuation of the devastating conflagration until the present day.

## A.

### THE QUESTION OF GUILT

In the introduction to his programmatic statement the English Minister, as has already been observed, devoted only a few short sentences to the antecedents of the war.



Had Germany in fact been attacked or forced to war by the Entente Powers in the summer of 1914, said Grey, then Germany's present war-aims, the extension and the guarantee of her power on the East and West, would have had a certain logical justification. But since Germany herself was the author of the European War, it was not Germany, but Europe, that had to seek for guarantees for future peace. And these guarantees were to be found only in an international league of peace organised on a basis of law.

In this connection the English Minister had again emphasised a few important points from the immediate antecedents of the war, in order once more to place Germany's offence in a true light. He emphasised Germany's negative attitude towards the English Conference-proposal, towards the Russian proposal for a decision by the Hague Tribunal, etc., and he described the Russian mobilisation—which is still advanced in Germany as the essential occasion of the war—as a defensive and not as an aggressive measure. In connection with this latter point, he made a side observation of no importance in substance, regarding a Press incident which took place in Berlin on July 30th, that, namely, which is concerned with an announcement in an extra edition of the *Lokal-Anzeiger*. By mentioning this incident in his short historical outline the English Minister may perhaps have appeared to assign to it an exaggerated importance. The relevant sentences in Grey's speech of October 23rd run as follows :

In July, 1914, no one thought of attacking Germany. It is said that Russia was the first to mobilise. That, I understand, is what is represented in Germany as a justification for the statement that the war was not an aggressive war on Germany's part but was forced upon her. Russia never made the mobilisation of which Germany complained until after Germany had refused a Conference, and she never made it until after a report had appeared in Germany that Germany had ordered mobilisation and that report had been telegraphed to Petrograd. As a matter of fact, it was the story of 1870 over again—preparation for war, not only the preparation of material, but the preparatory stages for war all advanced in Berlin to a point beyond that of any other country, and then, when the chosen moment came, a manoeuvre made to provoke some other country to take a defensive step.

Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg fastens on these sentences of Grey's in a long explanation regarding the origins of the



war which he delivered on November 9th, 1916, in the Main Committee of the Reichstag. The account given by the German Chancellor is again so full of perversions and distortions of the documentarily proved facts, that I should be obliged to write a new third book of accusation, merely to correct the errors and the crudities of Bethmann's most recent statement. As the necessary corrective is furnished with unambiguous perspicuity in my first and second books of arraignment, I may here restrict myself to bringing together the most important points from Bethmann's historical chronicle of the war, showing their untenability, and for the rest referring to the detailed demonstration of my assertions contained in my books.

## I.

Herr von Bethmann maintains that the Russian general mobilisation took place in the night from July 30th to July 31st, 1914. This is in contradiction with the account given in the German White Book, which, in agreement with all the other diplomatic documents, assigns the order for the Russian general mobilisation to the morning of July 31st :

"Before the telegram reached its destination, the mobilisation of all the Russian forces obviously directed against us, and already ordered during the morning of the 31st of July, was in full swing." (White Book, page 412.)

The assertion that the Russian general mobilisation had already been ordered in the night from July 30th to July 31st is now officially advanced for the first time on behalf of Germany. The object of this transposition is clear. Its purpose is to dispose of the demonstrated priority of the Austrian general mobilisation, which in fact was ordered at 1 a.m. in the night in question (see Yellow Book, No. 115), and to put the Russian general mobilisation in its place. I have already given an account of the sequence of the mobilisations in a brief form in my first book, and in the most detailed manner in my second book.<sup>1</sup> From

<sup>1</sup> See *The Crime*, Vol. I, page 337.



what is there said the reader will observe that the Russian general mobilisation was not the cause but the consequence of that of Austria, although it was, however, at the same time the consequence of the whole diplomatic action of Austria and Germany.

## II

The *Lokal-Anzeiger* story, which Herr von Bethmann purposely deals with at such length, obviously played a very small part, or no part at all, in the decisions of Russia. Herr von Bethmann deliberately selects this point in order to divert the attention of his hearers from the decisive points in the history of the conflict. What are the facts regarding the *Lokal-Anzeiger* affair? So far as I can see, we possess on the subject two despatches in the Russian Orange Book (Nos. 61 and 62) and one in the French Yellow Book (No. 105). In No. 61 Swerbeiev, the Russian Ambassador in Berlin, reports that the decree for the general mobilisation of the army and the navy had just been published (on July 30th). In No. 62 (of the same date) Swerbeiev reports that Herr von Jagow had just informed him by telephone of the inaccuracy of the Press-notice and of the confiscation of the numbers of the newspapers in question; the news sheets had been printed in advance so as to be ready for all eventualities (d'avance en prévision de toutes éventualités) and had been sold. Herr von Jagow made a similar telephonic communication at two o'clock in the afternoon of the same day to Jules Cambon, the French Ambassador (Yellow Book, No. 105). In his communication to Viviani, the Prime Minister, Cambon adds that the Crown Council held at Potsdam on the evening of July 29th, under the presidency of the Emperor and in the presence of the military authorities, had in fact decided on mobilisation, and that thereupon the special edition of the *Lokal-Anzeiger* had been prepared, but that the measures already decided upon had been suspended for various reasons (England's statement that she reserved for herself complete freedom of action; the exchange of telegrams between the Tsar and the Emperor). Cambon further reports a conversation which the Under-Secretary



Zimmermann had had with another ambassador in which he had emphasised the haste of the military authorities for mobilisation, and added that the General Staff saw war in mobilisation (*la hâte de l'état-major, qui dans la mobilisation voit la guerre*).

At the conclusion of his note Cambon makes a further very significant observation that, in spite of the suppression of the newspaper announcement, he had the strongest reasons to believe that all possible measures which could be taken before the official proclamation of the general mobilisation had already been taken, and that in Berlin they were merely endeavouring to secure that the official proclamation should in the first place be issued by France in order to attribute the responsibility to her.

These are the facts with regard to the premature announcement in the *Lokal-Anzeiger*, so far as they emerge from the diplomatic documents. Of the three telegrams which the Russian Ambassador Swerbeiev is said to have sent to Petrograd, the first and the third are printed in the Orange Book ; the second, which in substance agrees with the third, is not given in the Russian collection. I have already pointed out that the announcement of the semi-official paper could in itself have exercised no determining influence on the decisions of Petrograd. The only considerations that could then be decisive were the existing diplomatic and military facts. To one of the most important of those facts, the refusal of Grey's Conference, the English Minister refers in the same sentence as that in which he mentions the very characteristic, although in itself quite insignificant, newspaper affair. Herr von Bethmann suppresses the first and most important part of Grey's sentence, in order to try his dialectic skill on the second and unimportant part. According to the account of the English Minister, the refusal of Grey's Conference was one of the decisive considerations which revealed Germany's war intentions to the Russian Government, and compelled them to mobilisation as a measure of security and not of aggression. If on this occasion instead of giving a brief hint, Grey had desired to give a detailed history of the development of the conflict he could have referred, apart from the refusal of his



Conference, to a series of other diplomatic facts which made the bellicose intentions of Germany obvious. I have elsewhere explained in detail all these circumstances, and must here be content to indicate a few of them only:

On July 27th Grey's Conference was declined by Germany.

On July 29th the Emperor of Russia proposed a decision by the Hague Tribunal, but received no answer to this proposal.

On the previous day (July 28th) Berchtold had brusquely declined any further negotiation with Russia (Orange Book, No. 45; Red Book, No. 40).

On the day on which the *Lokal-Anzeiger* affair took place (July 30th) Sazonof's first formula of agreement (Orange Book, No. 60) was declined by Jagow with as much bluntness as had been shown by Berchtold two days previously in declining the further discussion of the Serbian question.<sup>1</sup> In various places in my book I have referred in appropriate words of censure to this decisive factor of guilt. The situation appears in No. 63 of the Orange Book. While Herr von Bethmann expatiates to the point of boredom on the insignificant *Lokal-Anzeiger* story which is mentioned in Nos. 61 and 62 of the Orange Book, he shyly passes by No. 63 which immediately follows, a document of capital importance, like the criminal who shuns the scene of his misdeed. Sazonof's first formula of agreement afforded the completest satisfaction to all the justifiable claims of Austria, and if it had been accepted would unquestionably have guaranteed peace, quite apart from Grey's Conference and the decision of the Hague Tribunal; yet this most important of all the proposals for arriving at an understanding,

<sup>1</sup> It may be advisable to recall here the terms of Sazonof's first formula of agreement. This formula was dictated on July 30th by Sazonof to Count Pourtalès; it was transmitted to Berlin on the same day and refused by Her von Jagow without further inquiry in Vienna, as "inacceptable to Austria." It runs as follows: "If Austria, recognising that the Austro-Serbian question has assumed the character of a question of European interest, declares herself ready to eliminate from her Ultimatum points which violate the sovereign rights of Serbia, Russia engages to stop her military preparations."



which puts beyond all doubt Russia's desire for peace, is to-day just as much suppressed by Herr von Bethmann as it always has been by him and his followers. The *Lokal-Anzeiger* story is for him more important than that most important point in the evidence of guilt against Germany. In fact he proceeds on the customary principle of defence: Why should the accused incriminate himself? This aspect of the matter he leaves to the rest of us.

If Grey had wished to enter into details he could further have referred to Sazonof's second proposal for agreement<sup>1</sup> (July 31st, Orange Book, No. 67), to Sazonof's last proposals for an understanding of July 31st and August 1st which I have described as Sazonof's third and fourth formulæ; he could have referred to the noble English plan of peace (Blue Book, No. 101), to England's invitation to Germany and Austria to propose, in place of the Conference, any other method of mediation, to make any reasonable proposal for peace which England would accept in advance (Blue Book, No. 111); he could have referred to countless other details in the diplomatic prelude to the war to demonstrate the unconditional desire for peace of the Entente Powers on the one hand, and the immovable intransigence of the Central Powers on the other. But since in his last speech the English Minister regarded the exposition of English war-aims as the essential subject of discussion, and cited the events in connection with the origin of the war merely as supporting considerations, he restricted himself to a few finger-posts to the antecedents of the war, and thus gave his opponent, Herr von Bethmann, the desired opportunity of seizing in his defence on an entirely insignificant point and thus once more throwing dust in the eyes of the German people. The Russian mobilisation was in fact—what Herr von Bethmann

<sup>1</sup> Sazonof's second formula of agreement of July 31st, to which no answer was ever given by Germany and Austria, runs as follows: "If Austria consents to stay the march of her troops on Serbian territory and if, recognising that the Austro-Serbian conflict has assumed the character of a question of European interest, she admits that the Great Powers may examine the satisfaction which Serbia can accord to the Austro-Hungarian Government without injury to her rights as a sovereign State or her independence, Russia undertakes to maintain her waiting attitude."



seeks to dispute—the handiwork of Germany. But it was not a subsidiary Press manœuvre, but the whole diplomatic and military attitude of Germany and Austria during the days of conflict that compelled Russia on July 31st to the measure of security involved in the general mobilisation.

### III

Herr von Bethmann quotes the telegram sent by the Tsar to the Emperor William on Friday, July 31st, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. He quotes, however, merely the one familiar sentence which speaks of the "technical impossibility" of discontinuing the Russian military preparations which had been made necessary by Austria's mobilisation. The Chancellor omits the five remaining sentences which testify to the Russian ruler's love of peace. The Tsar gives an assurance that he is far from wishing war; his troops will undertake no provocative action so long as negotiations between Austria and Serbia continue; on this he gives his solemn word; he hopes for the success of the Emperor's mediation in Vienna, for the welfare of the countries concerned, and for the peace of Europe, etc. All this Herr von Bethmann leaves aside in order to be able to establish his thesis that Russia wanted war, and in virtue of the support of England and France summoned up courage to provoke it.

### IV

Herr von Bethmann once again repeats the untruth that Austria had mobilised only eight army corps against Serbia, but had not taken other military measures until the Russian general mobilisation. Must I again—as I have already done so often—draw the German Chancellor's attention to the fact that he himself, in his speech of August 4th, 1914, admitted the mobilisation of two army corps "to the North," that is to say, against Russia? The fact that Austria's general mobilisation preceded that of Russia on July 31st, I have already emphasised above, and proved beyond dispute elsewhere.



## V

Herr von Bethmann again repeats the assertion, which has become hackneyed in German war literature, that Russia failed to answer the German Ultimatum. I have elsewhere proved that the Tsar's telegram of August 1st, 2 p.m., that is to say, two hours after the expiration of the Ultimatum, contains the unmistakable answer to the latter, and that it does so, moreover, in a form which was particularly insistent, and calculated to achieve the maintenance of peace.<sup>1</sup>

## VI

In the critical period, while the time-limit specified in the Ultimatum was running out, England is said to have "wrapped herself in silence towards Russia." So asserts the Chancellor. What, however, does the Blue Book show?—A feverish interchange of telegrams between London and Petrograd. It would take us too far to cite once again in this place all the details of the exchange of Notes in the last hours before the German declaration of war! One should read in the Blue Book despatches Nos. 110, 113, 120, 131, 132, 133, 135, 139, etc., and generally the whole exchange of Notes from and to London on July 31st and August 1st (Blue Book, Nos. 108 to 143) in order to realise how eloquent was the English "silence" in these dangerous hours.

## VII

Herr von Bethmann again charges the French Government with having denied the Russian general mobilisation on the evening of July 31st. I have already referred elsewhere to Paléologue's note of July 31st (Yellow Book, No. 118), which intimated the Russian general mobilisation to Paris, although possibly at the moment of Viviani's conversation with Schön it was not yet in the possession, or had not yet come to the knowledge, of the French Premier.

<sup>1</sup> *The Crime*, Vol. I, page 378 *et seq.*



## VIII

For the first time Herr von Bethmann now puts forward the assertion that France had ordered her mobilisation "a few hours earlier" than Germany. This is in contradiction, not only with the German White Book, but also Bethmann's speech of August 4th, 1914. In the German White Book (page 413) it is expressly stated that the mobilisation of the German as well as the French forces was ordered at 5 o'clock on the afternoon of August 1st. In the Chancellor's speech of August 4th we read: "France who mobilised at the same time as we did." The object in view is now suddenly suggesting that France mobilised some hours earlier is obvious. It is intended to demonstrate that Germany was in the "state of defence," and had to defend herself. This purpose sanctifies even the most recent means adopted, that of the invention of the previous mobilisation of France.

## IX

Much interest attaches to the production of a hitherto entirely unknown document, namely, an instruction which Herr von Bethmann sent to Vienna to the German Ambassador, Herr von Tschirschky, in the last days of July—the Chancellor does not give the date more closely. To these instructions of Bethmann to Tschirschky, which appear in instalments, there hangs a tale. For a year after the beginning of the war the whole world demanded from the German Government the publication of the telegrams exchanged between Berlin and Vienna, which had received very niggardly treatment in the White Book and the Red Book. The alleged "pressure" exercised by Berlin on Vienna with a view to arriving at an understanding with Russia required a strict demonstration, since the failure of Berlin's peace efforts was bound to awaken the insistent suspicion that they may not have erred on the side of earnestness and energy. On August 19th, 1915, Herr von Bethmann at last came forward with an instruction to Herr von Tschirschky which I have



discussed in detail elsewhere. That telegram is concerned with the famous "misunderstanding" which was alleged to exist between Vienna and Petrograd on the subject of Berchtold's inclination to continue negotiations with Sazonof, and was supposed to have been removed by Berlin's labour of enlightenment. In reality, as is well known, there was no question of a misunderstanding, but of a real and categorical refusal by Count Berchtold of any negotiations with Russia. Further, the fact that the instruction was published so late in the day gives rise to grave doubts and suspicion—with regard to which reference may be made to the relevant passage in my second book.<sup>1</sup>

And now, after an interval of fifteen months, there suddenly appears another instruction from Bethmann to Tschirschky, the exact date of which again is not given. It must, however, have arrived at Vienna between July 29th and 31st, when the instructions contained in it must have been carried out by the German Ambassador. According to Bethmann's statement, this second instruction does not, like the first, relate to a general exchange of ideas between Vienna and Petrograd, but has special reference to Grey's well-known proposal for agreement which I have described as Grey's first formula (Blue Book, No. 88, July 29th, and the telegram from the King of England to Prince Henry of July 30th).<sup>2</sup> Herr von Bethmann maintains that he exercised the same insistent pressure in Vienna with regard to the acceptance of Grey's formula of agreement as had marked his previous telegram on the subject of direct Austro-Russian negotiations :

"We were therefore obliged to recommend the Viennese Government with the utmost urgency and

<sup>1</sup> *The Crime*, Vol. I, page 282 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> Grey's formula of agreement of July 29th as given in Blue Book, No. 88, runs as follows : "It was, of course, too late for all military operations against Serbia to be suspended. In a short time, I supposed, the Austrian forces would be in Belgrade, and in occupation of some Serbian territory. But even then it might be possible to bring some mediation into existence, if Austria, while saying that she must hold the occupied territory until she had complete satisfaction from Serbia, stated that she would not advance further, pending an effort of the Powers to mediate between her and Russia."



emphasis to accept mediation on the conditions offered. The responsibility for the consequences which might otherwise supervene would have been for Austria-Hungary and for us uncommonly heavy."

These, according to Bethmann's statements, are the concluding sentences of this second instruction to Tschirschky.

As I am accustomed to wage the fight for truth with fair weapons, and not with unproved insinuations as is the manner of the German War Press, I shall refrain from representing these instructions of Bethmann which are set before us in teaspoonfuls—if it proceeds at this rate it will be more than ten years after the war before we are in possession of the complete exchange of Notes between Berlin and Vienna—I shall refrain from representing them, I say, as mere phantoms which were never alive and which have now been posthumously clothed with an appearance of life. I will believe the German Chancellor, or at any rate I will not dispute that these two instructions were at the time really sent to Vienna in the form in which they are before us. But, I have the right to ask, Why have these instructions not been mentioned before now? Why has this most important weapon in defence of the German Government been so long concealed—the one instruction for a year, the other for two years and a quarter? He who has committed a misdeed has every reason and every interest to put forward the proof of his innocence with the utmost promptness and completeness. Shortly after the outbreak of war the English Government produced for the world's judgment the whole of its documentary material, all the correspondence with foreign Governments, all the instructions to their own Ambassadors. A few months later France took the same step. Germany and Austria alone have shown a suspicious obstinacy in keeping secret the correspondence between them, although the whole world, including many people in Germany itself, cried aloud for the ventilation of this interesting secret. And now Herr von Bethmann comes along and brings us—like the maiden from far countries—a yearly remembrance in celebration of the anniversary



of the outbreak of war in the form of *one* instruction to Tschirschky, which every time fits in remarkably well with what he is wanting to prove. Have we not some reason to become distrustful?

So far as Bethmann's last revelation is concerned, our distrust is further increased by the way in which Grey's proposal for agreement had hitherto been treated (in the White Book and the Red Book). The White Book merely says on this question: "We even as late as July 30th forwarded the English proposal to Vienna." The Red Book (No. 51) merely speaks in the following colourless phrase of the transmission of Grey's proposal to Vienna: "Herr von Tschirschky has in accordance with his instructions yesterday communicated a discussion between Sir E. Grey and Prince Lichnowsky." A "transmission" and a "communication in accordance with instructions" seem to me to be very far removed from the insistent pressure which, according to Bethmann's text, it is suggested the instruction contained. I am not called upon to solve riddles, nor do I have any gift in this direction. For me Bethmann's instruction remains a riddle on account of its long concealment—it has never even been mentioned orally—and above all on account of the contradiction which exists between the platonic "transmission" in the White Book and the extremely urgent recommendation in the text which has now become known.

It appears to me, however, that this instruction is most suspicious when I consider its complete failure. I have already repeatedly pointed out that if Berlin seriously desired the adoption of any course, it could not but be unconditionally approved in Vienna. If Berlin had recommended Grey's formula in Vienna as emphatically as would appear from the text of Bethmann's instruction, the only course open to Vienna would have been quietly to accept the proposal, and thus peace would have been preserved.

What, however, did Vienna really do?

Herr von Bethmann maintains that the Viennese Government complied with the urgent representations made by Berlin, which can only mean that they accepted Grey's proposal for agreement (the occupation of Belgrade, etc.).



In proof of this the Chancellor quotes the two last paragraphs of Note 51 of the Red Book dated July 31st, 1914 (Berchtold's telegram to his Ambassadors in London and Petrograd, in which a telegram from Berchtold to his Berlin Ambassador is reproduced). In invoking No. 51 of the Red Book to prove that the Viennese Government had accepted Grey's formula of agreement (Blue Book, No. 88) there is involved a gross confusion of facts, which is skilfully and ingeniously contrived, betraying as its author, Herr Dr. Helfferich, the Chancellor's deputy, a man of great accomplishments in such matters. In reality, the Viennese Government not only did not accept Grey's formula of agreement (Blue Book, No. 88) but—so far as the German, the Austrian and all the other publications testify—they never expressed any views regarding this proposal. I would ask the reader to peruse in *J'accuse* and in the first volume of *The Crime* the passages which give documentary proof of this assertion.<sup>1</sup> No. 51 of the Red Book which Herr von Bethmann quotes—although prudently he gives only half of it—in no way relates to Grey's proposal for agreement embodying the occupation of Belgrade, etc. This appeared for the first time in a precise form on the afternoon of July 29th in a conversation between Grey and Lichnowsky (Blue Book, No. 88). Berchtold's telegram of July 31st refers rather to another conversation between Grey and Lichnowsky, which also took place on July 29th, but on the morning of that day, and in which the discussion turned merely in general terms on the mediation of the four Powers or some other form of mediation to be proposed by Germany (Blue Book, No. 84). Paragraphs 1 to 3 of Berchtold's note of July 31st (Red Book, No. 51) show beyond doubt that Berchtold is merely speaking in general of mediation by the four Powers (Blue Book, No. 84, mentions conversations *à quatre* in London), but that not a word is said of a definite proposal put forward by Grey for agreement. As already observed, I would ask the reader to turn up the strict proof of this fact in the pages indicated in my books. I have there laid special emphasis on the fact that the Austrian

<sup>1</sup> See *J'accuse*, pages 153, 156, 177–180, 344–6; *The Crime*, Vol. I, pages 482–7.



Red Book in mentioning and discussing proposals for mediation does not in fact get further than No. 84 of the Blue Book (conversation in the morning of July 29th between Grey and Lichnowsky). All the attempts to mediate and arrive at an understanding which took place after the conversation on that morning, issuing in feverish activity from the three capitals of the Entente Powers—during the period from the morning of July 29th to August 1st (the date of the German declaration of war against Russia)—have no existence for Viennese diplomacy, and not a word is said about them in their documentary collection.

I must therefore describe the German Chancellor's assertion that in Berchtold's Note of July 31st Austria had accepted Grey's formula for agreement (the occupation of Belgrade, etc.) as a perversion of the truth which, in view of the accurate knowledge of the subject possessed by the speaker and the subtle contrivance of the untruth, can only be intentional. If instead of quoting the last two paragraphs Herr von Bethmann had quoted the whole of Note 51, in particular the second and third paragraphs, even the most uninformed reader would at once have recognised that Berchtold's readiness to accept a general mediation in the Austro-Serbian dispute was in no way identical with the acceptance of Grey's quite precise formula of agreement, which Herr von Bethmann professes to have recommended by his instruction to Tschirschky.

I repeat again with the utmost definiteness that Austria, so far as the documents show, never expressed any views regarding Grey's formula of agreement, much less did she accept it. If therefore this instruction to Tschirschky, this suspiciously belated production, is authentic, it at any rate achieved no success—a fact which again admits a doubt as to its existence, or at any rate its sincerity.

But let us assume that Note 51 of the Red Book was in fact an answer to Grey's proposal for agreement and to the support it received in Berlin; we are nevertheless forced to ask whether Berchtold's Note in fact contains an acceptance of the English proposal in its essential points. I answer this question bluntly in the negative. Berchtold's Note refers, it is true, not to the conversation



between Grey and Lichnowsky on the afternoon of July 29th, but to the conversation on the morning of the same day (Blue Book, No. 84). But even the general proposals for mediation which Grey made on that morning encounter such grave obstacles on the part of Count Berchtold that the statement of the latter represents anything but a concurrence.

Herr von Bethmann himself quotes the "presuppositions of our acceptance" as formulated by Count Berchtold, and among these presuppositions appears in the first place "that our military action against Serbia should continue to take its course." Is that not exactly the opposite of Grey's proposal for agreement, which required the suspension of Austria's military action after "the occupation of Belgrade and the neighbouring Serbian territory"? (This is how it is expressed in the telegram from the English King of July 30th, which in its meaning exactly agrees with Grey's various formulæ.) Is not, I ask, Austria's demand for a continuance of her military action diametrically opposed to Grey's request that this military action must be brought to a stop on the occupation of Belgrade and the neighbouring territory? Strictly read, the answer of Vienna is exactly the opposite of what the Berlin Government had asked of Vienna. In his telegram to Tschirschky, Herr von Bethmann rightly draws the attention of the Viennese Government to the point I have so often emphasised in my explanations, namely, that Grey's formula gave full satisfaction to all the justifiable claims of Austria for the maintenance of her military and political prestige; that these claims "could be sufficiently maintained by the occupation of Belgrade or other places." Did the Viennese Government by any chance realise this fact and thereupon accept Grey's formula? Not at all. They warmly thank Herr Secretary von Jagow for the communications made through the Ambassador in Vienna, and declare that they "are quite prepared to entertain the proposal of Sir E. Grey to negotiate between us and Serbia." But there is not a suggestion of any restriction of their military action to the occupation of Belgrade or of other places, such as Berlin, in agreement with London, had demanded. A continuance of the military



action against Serbia, in addition to this the demand that the Russian mobilisation directed against Austria must be brought to a standstill, that is to say that Russia with folded arms should tranquilly witness the crushing of Serbia—that is the substance of Berchtold's Note of July 31st, and that is what Herr von Bethmann attempts to represent to us as an acquiescence in the English formula of agreement which, as is alleged, was supported by Berlin. The German Chancellor must indeed have a very low opinion of the intelligence of his hearers and readers if he does not give them the credit of being able to recognise the yawning gulf between his note of recommendation and the answer from Vienna. Anyone who confines himself to a comparison of these two documents in the Chancellor's speech, even if he leaves aside all the other objections which I have raised against the sincerity of Bethmann's demonstration and even if he avoids the study of the original documents and their connection to each other, must recognise, merely from the quotations of the Chancellor, that Vienna never answered Grey's special formula of agreement, but that in its answer to Grey's general proposals for mediation it imposed conditions which are diametrically opposed to the decisive points in Grey's formula of agreement.

Had Grey's formula or Sazonof's later formulæ been accepted by Vienna, peace would have been preserved. If the Berlin Government in fact supported Grey's proposal as energetically as it now asserts, why, I ask, did it not insist on the acceptance of this proposal in Vienna; why did it not, in the event of a refusal, cut itself free from Austrian policy? Why, I further ask, did the Berlin Government on their own behalf directly refuse Sazonof's first formula of agreement and leave the second unanswered, if they intervened so energetically for the acceptance of Grey's formula? Sazonof's first formula (Orange Book, No. 60) did not even demand a suspension of Austria's military operations. It therefore demanded even less than Grey's formula (the occupation of Belgrade, etc.). How is it possible to reconcile the fact that Herr von Jagow on July 30th declined Sazonof's conciliatory formula, which demanded less, as "inacceptable to Austria,"



while he claims to have recommended in Vienna with so much urgency Grey's more exacting formula which demanded so much more. All these doubtful questions and grounds of suspicion are suggested by Bethmann's most recent revelation. For me the solution of all these riddles is impossible. One thing, however, I know, and state with the utmost definiteness: At no time did the Austrian Government accept Grey's formula of agreement of July 29th (Blue Book, No. 88).

## X

Herr von Bethmann asserts the contrary—although he is wrong in so doing—and he then proceeds: "Thus in the night from July 30th to July 31st Russia was confronted with the fact that Austria-Hungary under our influence had assumed a compliant disposition which opened the way to the maintenance of peace. . . ." In the night from July 30th to July 31st—be it observed! Here Herr von Bethmann has been caught in his own snare. Even if Austria had revealed a pliant disposition by the acceptance of Grey's formula—which is not the case—this pliability would not have been expressed until Berchtold's despatch of July 31st, which Bethmann himself quotes as the document in proof of Austria's conciliatoriness. It was not until July 31st—presumably not before the afternoon of that day—that the conciliatory Viennese telegram could have come to the knowledge of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. It cannot therefore have done so in the night from July 30th to July 31st when this telegram did not exist, nor can it have done so before the Russian general mobilisation which, as I have elsewhere shown, was decreed on the morning of July 31st. When the order for the Russian general mobilisation was issued, there existed—apart from the previous Austrian general mobilisation and far-reaching German military measures—merely such diplomatic acts on the part of Germany and Austria as represented an absolute intransigence on the part of the two Central Powers, a refusal of all peaceful means of arriving at an understanding. As the last and decisive



action of this nature, there was the refusal by Jagow of Sazonof's first formula of agreement. This brusque, unexplained refusal, as I have repeatedly emphasised elsewhere, could not but lead to the Russian general mobilisation. That was the last drop in the diplomatic game which filled the cup of Russian patience to overflowing. That was the situation which, taken in conjunction with the Austrian and German military measures, led at some time between July 30th and July 31st to the decision to carry out the general mobilisation. Even if Berchtold's Note of July 31st had been a conciliatory act—with all its reservations and stipulations it was in fact the contrary—it would in any case have been too late in becoming known in Petrograd—that is to say, it would have been too late after the general mobilisation had already been ordered. The ante-dating of Berchtold's Note from July 31st to the night from July 30th to July 31st is such a flagrant act of falsification that it is sufficient to cause the collapse of the whole edifice of Herr von Bethmann's demonstration.

## XI

The Chancellor's attempt to invoke a Russian army order of September 30th, 1912, as an alleged proof of the aggressive character of the Russian general mobilisation of July 31st, 1914, can be described only as an act of extreme desperation. No evidence has yet been given of the authenticity of this army order, which now for the first time appears upon the screen, arousing in the whole of Germany the cry of relief: "Now at last we have complete proof that Russia meant to attack us and did in fact do so." According to the detailed communication in the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* this order was issued on September 30th, 1912, by the chief of the General Staff of the Warsaw military area to the commander of the Sixth Army Corps. In addition to a number of military orders, it contains the following sentence which, in the opinion of the German Chancellor, is supposed to furnish complete proof of Russia's war intentions in the summer of 1914:



“It is ordered by the All-highest that the proclamation of the mobilisation is also at the same time the proclamation of war against Germany.”

The simplest logical examination of this sentence—always assuming that the whole document is authentic—is sufficient to prove the fallacy of the conclusions drawn by Herr von Bethmann. How can a chief of the General Staff, in the course of a military instruction to a corps commander, anticipate the decisions of the Tsar of Russia in such a way as to enable him to state that Russian mobilisation is equivalent to a declaration of war against Germany—in other words, that war would not and need not be expressly declared against Germany, but that it would already be existent, if only mobilisation were ordered in Russia; that war would not arise as a direct expression of the Tsar’s will, but that its beginning would be indirectly inferred, interpretatively, from a military measure. This interpretation is indeed “ordered by the All-highest”! Strange, very strange indeed, is this instruction of the General Staff which once for all by an authentic interpretation restricts in advance the decisions of the Russian Emperor. Even stranger is the fact that this instruction of September, 1912, so far as military orders are concerned, was in fact carried out at that time, but that war with Germany, nevertheless, did not, as we know, break out in September, 1912.

The solution of the riddle is extremely simple. Although the Russian Government has so far made no statement regarding the significance of Bethmann’s most recent revelation, we know that on exactly the same day as that on which this General Staff instruction is dated—September 30th, 1912—the Russian telegraphic agency published an Imperial ukase, in virtue of which twenty-one military districts bordering on Austria-Hungary and Germany were summoned to a test mobilisation (the *Wiener Arbeiterzeitung*, which on other occasions is a good social patriotic paper, has in a very meritorious manner drawn attention to this fact). This explains the whole business; we are merely concerned with a subject for manœuvres which the General Staff set to the general in command.



Every subject for manœuvres in the case of Russian test mobilisations towards the West inevitably presupposed a war against Germany and Austria, just as the corresponding subjects for manœuvres in the case of Germany towards the East must inevitably have presupposed a war against Russia. Just as the yearly German manœuvres towards the East or West in no way signified war against Russia or France, so it is impossible to infer from the Russian instructions as to manœuvres, dated September 30th, 1912, bellicose intentions against Germany—least of all the existence of such intentions in the summer of 1914. As a matter of fact, these September manœuvres did take place in 1912 without implying war against Germany. How incredibly foolish then is the demonstration that this same instruction which at that time, although it was actually carried out, in no way disturbed the peace, should now two years later have suddenly become a tocsin of war. How desperately must a cause be situated when for its salvation it has to clutch at such frail straws !

## XII

On this occasion Herr von Bethmann again repeats Helfferich's familiar inference to the effect that Grey had already promised his armed support to the French Republic on July 29th, and that France thereupon declared her solidarity with Russia, and that Russia on this sure basis of Anglo-French military support decided on war. In the first volume of my second book I have devoted a lengthy chapter to Helfferich's achievement in construing a crucial day for the aggressive conspiracy, and I need not return to the point here. I merely take the liberty of respectfully submitting to Herr von Bethmann the following questions on this subject:

(a) If Russia wanted war, why did she accept the conference of the four Powers, and submit in advance to their decision ?

(b) If on July 29th there was nothing Russia longed for more vehemently than to assure herself of the armed support of France and England, why did the



Tsar on the same day propose to the Emperor William that a decision should be obtained by resort to the Hague Tribunal ?

(c) If Russia wanted war, and definitely resolved on war on July 29th in consequence of the promise of support received from England and France, why did she in the following days, from July 30th to August 1st, unremittingly continue to make new proposals for peace and for agreement ?

### XIII

If it were not so entirely tragic, it would be ludicrous to observe the manner in which Herr von Bethmann, like a skilful acrobat, clears the Hague Tribunal and Grey's Conference. The emphasis laid by Grey on these most important points in the antecedents of the war is described by Herr von Bethmann as "an attempt to divert the attention of his hearers to subsidiary matters." The Hague Tribunal—a subsidiary matter ! Grey's Conference—a subsidiary matter ! No, Herr von Bethmann, these are the central and cardinal points in the whole antecedents of the war. If the only thing the Tsar had done had been to address to the Emperor William his telegram of July 29th proposing a decision by the Hague Tribunal, if the only thing the Emperor William had done had been to ignore this proposal and secure its omission from the first German White Book, these two facts in themselves would incontrovertibly prove that the Tsar desired peace and that the German Emperor wanted war. "The allusion to the Hague Tribunal," says Herr von Bethmann, "sounds very ominous on the surface, but it was suggested at a moment when Russian troops had already been set in motion against us." What ! Had Russian troops been set in motion against Germany on July 29th ? How is that ? Where was that ever proved, or even asserted ? "On July 29th the Russian Government made the official notification in Berlin that four army districts had been mobilised." So says the White Book (page 410). These were the four southern military districts of Kief, Odessa, Moscow and Kasan,



directed against Austria. Nowhere in any diplomatic document, either in the White Book or the Red Book, has it so far been asserted that Russia had already mobilised against Germany on July 29th, much less that she had already set her troops in motion against Germany. This is a new fiction, so enormous in its dimensions, that it is alone sufficient to imprint the stamp of untruth on the whole of Bethmann's account of the antecedents of the war. And this most recent invention, this one sentence of twenty-six untrue words is supposed to furnish a sufficient reason for the portentous fact that the German Emperor and his Government had refused the simplest, the most natural and the surest way for the avoidance of war! If anything could characterise the guilt and the consciousness of guilt of the German potentates, it is this halting, invented excuse for a criminal action, which for thousands of years will still rest on the memory of the guilty.

And Grey's Conference? That too is for Herr von Bethmann a subsidiary matter. What does he urge against the Conference proposal? "Lord Grey had himself withdrawn his Conference-proposal in favour of our mediation." That is all. This, for Herr von Bethmann, gets rid of the Conference just as effectively as the Hague Tribunal has already been disposed of. Now, it is unnecessary that I should again go into the fate of Grey's Conference-proposal, of which I have elsewhere given a detailed account. Bethmann's specious pretext that Grey had himself withdrawn his Conference-proposal has already been repeatedly advanced by the Chancellor, for example, in the interview with the American journalist, Wiegand (May, 1916).

This is one of those legends which I have already refuted elsewhere (*The Crime*, Vol. I, page 93 *et seq.*) by a strict counter-demonstration drawn from the diplomatic documents. A perusal of the chapter in question will convince anyone that Grey never withdrew or placed in the background his Conference-proposal, but rather that he merely expressed the view: *If* a direct discussion and understanding were possible between Vienna and Petrograd, this would of course be the simplest and surest way of arriving at a peaceful solution of the conflict. After the direct



discussion with the Russian Government had been emphatically refused by Count Berchtold on July 28th, Grey's Conference-proposal once again automatically assumed the first place among all the possibilities for arriving at an understanding, and it was continually being recommended with increasing urgency by all the diplomatists of the Entente Powers—Ministers as well as Ambassadors—as the most propitious path of mediation, although these recommendations achieved no success. What a bitter irony is in the phrase which the Chancellor advances in excuse of his attitude towards Grey's Conference-proposal! The German mediation, in favour of which Grey is supposed to have withdrawn his proposal, consisted in the recommendation of direct discussions between Vienna and Petrograd. What Germany recommended was refused by Austria. And despite this refusal, it is suggested that Grey put his Conference-proposal in the background! In that case a vacuum would have been created, and any further attempt to arrive at an understanding excluded. This vacuum was in fact completely filled by a new and more insistent emphasis of the Conference-proposal and by all the remaining proposals for an understanding advanced by the Entente Powers.

Grey has rightly pointed out that the experiences of the Balkan crises of 1908-9 and of 1912-13 did not give the Governments of the Central Powers the slightest occasion to doubt the loyalty and the good will of the English Government in promoting the maintenance of the peace of Europe and in the attainment as far as possible of complete satisfaction for the Austrian demands. Apart from the experiences of the past, the English Minister might also have pointed to the present crisis and emphasised all the assurances which the Entente Powers gave in favour of the Austrian demands, in the event of the acceptance of the Conference. (Compare on this point *J'accuse*, pages 351-2, and the passages there quoted from the Blue Book, the Orange Book, the Yellow Book and the Red Book.) At the Conference the Entente Powers were prepared to go the utmost limits of the Austrian demands, if only Austria and Germany would be prepared to allow a discussion of the question by the four Powers not directly



interested. It was all in vain. The Conference was throughout refused, and this refusal, which eliminated the surest path to an understanding—the path which in the past had also been proved to be most effective, will for all time constitute one of the gravest items of guilt in the debit account of the German and Austrian Governments.

To the two most important points in the antecedents of the war, Grey's Conference and the Tsar's proposal of July 29th regarding a decision by the Hague Conference, the German Chancellor devotes in all seven lines; he subjects, however, the miserable *Lokal-Anzeiger* affair to a discussion running to columns. This also is a characteristic indication of the nature and the value of his demonstration.

#### XIV

It is impossible at this stage to enter again into all the points in the antecedents of the war which Herr von Bethmann once more brings forward in the familiar German version. All these points, without exception, are discussed in detail in my first and in this my second book. The reader will everywhere find a detailed refutation of the superficialities and perversions advanced by the Chancellor. Among the points into which I have entered in detail elsewhere special mention may be made of the following :

The English promise of contingent naval support to France (Blue Book, No. 148) ;

The meaning and the significance of Bethmann's bid for neutrality (Blue Book, No. 85) ;

The conversation between Grey and Lichnowsky on August 1st (Blue Book, No. 123) and its interpretation in the light of the first and second German White Books ;

The various offers which the German Government made to the English Government from July 29th to August 4th as an equivalent for the maintenance of English neutrality, etc.



In concluding his hastily sketched outline of these events, which I have treated with scientific care in many pages, the Chancellor asks the question :

“ Who wanted war ? Was it we, who were prepared to give England every conceivable guarantee, not merely for English interests immediately concerned, but also for France and Belgium, or was it England who declined every one of our proposals, and refused for her part even to indicate any path leading to the maintenance of peace between our two countries ? ”

The answer to this question is very simple : Germany wanted the continental war, but not the war with England. I have already put this forward in *J'accuse* as an incontrovertible fact. Even at the time of the Anglo-German negotiations for an understanding in 1909-12 Germany strained every nerve to secure for herself elbow-room on the Continent, and to assign to England the rôle of an inactive spectator. Throughout these negotiations it is always possible to detect the *arrière-pensée* which runs through all German policy and permeates Pan-German literature : “ If once we are lords on the Continent, it will be an easy task for us to dispossess England from her position of world-dominion.”

The idea was also the guiding motive of German policy in the last critical days before the outbreak of war. We may therefore without concern bear testimony to the German Chancellor, that he did not want war against England, that up to the last moment he sought in every way and by all sorts of promises to prevent the adherence of England to his enemies. But war against Russia and France he did want, whether it was on his own impulse or whether from weakness towards the pressure exercised from above and from below. With the declaration of war against Russia the continental war was begun. The entrance of France was a logical consequence of the Russo-German war, just as the fact that Austria and Germany acted in concert was a consequence of the alliance between these countries. It is no doubt true that Germany did not want war with England, but she provoked it by the violation of Belgian neutrality and by her refusal to with-



draw from this violation in compliance with the English Ultimatum (Blue Book, No. 160). Herr von Bethmann boasts of his earnest endeavour to *localise* the war. England, however, was animated by a much more earnest endeavour to *prevent* the war. From the first to the last moment of the crisis, every action of Sir Edward Grey's bears witness to this unwearying endeavour. The crowning point is represented by his solemn appeal of July 30th inviting Herr von Bethmann to join in common labour in the cause of peace (Blue Book, No. 101). Herr von Bethmann may speak and pervert and trifle as much as he likes. History has pronounced her judgment, and will in no wise alter it: Grey was the advocate of peace; Bethmann the author of the war.

## B

## WAR-AIMS

So far as Bethmann's speech discussed the question of guilt, apart from certain details, it offered nothing new: there were the same convulsive attempts as before to falsify the picture of the antecedents of the war by emphasising insignificant facts, by omitting or attenuating or perverting facts of importance, and thus to lay on others a responsibility which those who are guilty are gradually beginning to feel as an intolerable burden on their own shoulders. The surprises came at the conclusion of the Chancellor's speech, when Herr von Bethmann suddenly revealed himself as a pacifist of the purest water, ready to join the international league as outlined by Grey, and indeed to place himself at its head. On November 9th, 1916, even Herr von Bethmann suddenly recognised the truth of what, during his seven previous years of office, he had always regarded as a Utopia and had in practice repudiated: the necessity of "peaceful agreements and conditions which, so far as such a consummation lies within human power, will prevent the recurrence of so enormous a catastrophe." Germany—so the Chancellor now announces for the first time—will honourably co-operate in any attempt to realise



such an aim, and on sea as well as on land it will seek to enforce "the principle of right and of free development."

When I read these sentiments in Bethmann's speech I could hardly believe my eyes. What did it mean? This was said by the man who during the whole of his long tenure of office had always proclaimed the impossibility of any pacifist postulate, of any organisation of the community of nations on a basis of law, indeed of any treaty agreement as to armaments no matter how restricted its scope, who had always stated that the difficulties in the way were insoluble "so long as men were men, and States States"! This classical utterance was made in Bethmann's speech in the Reichstag on March 30th, 1911, at the time when negotiations for an understanding were being conducted with England: it was the answer to Grey's remarkable speech of March 12th, 1911, which in a warning and prophetic manner foretold the collapse of civilisation, if it were not found possible to restrict by an agreement between the Powers the constant increase of expenditure on armaments, and above all if it were not possible to arrive at an agreement with Germany on this point. What Grey then said was the constant theme of his colleagues in Asquith's Cabinet. All the Liberal Ministers without exception—the very men who are to-day exposed to contumely in Germany as the authors of the fearful war—Lloyd George, Churchill, Asquith, McKenna and the others, never grew weary of emphasising the appalling fact involved in the "expenditure by Christian communities of 400 millions a year upon preparing one nation to kill another" (Lloyd George at the World Peace Congress in London, 1908). Elsewhere in dealing with the Hague Conferences and the Anglo-German negotiations for an understanding I have fully explained how these speeches of the English Ministers were transformed into practical actions.

And what attitude did the Chancellor, who now suddenly reveals himself as a convinced pacifist, assume towards these English efforts which even at that time sought to make pacifism a reality, and thus abolish the European tension and the continual menace of war? Herr von Bethmann comported himself towards all these ideas



and efforts in exactly the same way as his predecessor Prince Bülow, who even to-day in his most recent book writes as if there were in the world of "real" politics no pacifist ideas and possibilities, as if the old threads of a diplomatic and military policy of power must still continue to be spun to the end of the world. Throughout the whole of his long period of office Herr von Bethmann adhered to this traditional Prussian-German standpoint with regard to the pacifist circle of ideas, blind and deaf to the obvious and increasingly perceptible fact that beyond the frontier posts of Germany and Austria pacifism had every year increasingly conquered the world, and was slumbering like a fruitful germ within the minds of all the progressive spirits in both hemispheres. All these facts were unknown and unrecognised in Berlin. They were not recognised even on the outbreak of the war which was proclaimed in derision as the bankruptcy of pacifism, whereas in reality it merely served to seal pacifist prophecies and to confirm the justice of pacifist demands. Even a few months ago, however, this was in no way recognised in the leading places in Germany. Even in his speeches in the spring of this year (1916) Herr von Bethmann had not a word to say on the subject of a German pacifist programme for the future. It was on April 5th, 1916, that he delivered his worst and most extreme annexationist speech in the Reichstag: the only object that he advanced as a war-aim was the acquisition of guarantees for Germany's power in the future. The war map alone was to furnish the measure of Germany's peace demands. Russia was to cede the enormous territory extending from the Baltic Sea to the Volhynian marshes, in order to guarantee the better security of Germany against future attacks; (it may be observed that in the course of the war an attempt has already been made to make an advance towards this object by the "liberation" of Poland). In the West real guarantees of a military, economic and political character were to be created to prevent Belgium being again misused as a deploying ground for French and English attacks on peace-loving Germany. In the West as in the East, Germany was to appear as the liberator of oppressed nationalities, on the one side of the Flemings, on the other of



the Letts, the Lithuanians, the Courlanders and the Poles. In short, it was an annexationist programme of the purest water, without any pacifist milk added, that the Chancellor proclaimed only a few months ago to the Germans and to all the world as the German war-aim.

And suddenly to-day there is the purest milk of a pious frame of mind! Instead of the trumpets of war, we hear the string music of the mildest policy of peace. The acquisitions in the East are passed over in silence after the main object, Poland, is believed to have been definitely swallowed. As regards the West, we are given the solemn assurance that the "annexation" of Belgium has never been described as Germany's intention (no, but the Chancellor has expressly announced his war-aim to be the "liberation" of the Flemings and the creation of "political guarantees" in Belgium, and this he has so far never retracted). And for Europe? We have the exaltation of Right to the place of supreme authority in place of the former sole domination of Might.

This most recent picture of the future drawn by Bethmann is too beautiful, its genesis is too sudden, to enable me to give it any credence. As I have elsewhere proved, the English statesmen, not merely in the period before the war but also from the beginning of the war onwards, have never ceased to preach, and to put forward as their most important war-aim, the creation of an organisation resting on law for the prevention of future wars, and on this basis of law the reduction by treaty of armaments. The views of their English Allies have also been gradually acknowledged by the French statesmen, although, in the first fearful period when their innocent country was subjected to the inroad of the fury of war, they may in part have entertained, as can very well be understood, more far-reaching plans to render the criminal disturbers of the peace permanently harmless. They also have proclaimed as their war-aim the creation of "international sanctions for the maintenance of peace." Both groups of statesmen—English as well as French—are merely continuing in their demands as to war-aims that policy which England and France have consistently followed since the first Hague Conference in 1899, and of which also they gave unwearying



confirmation during the critical twelve days—the policy of a peaceful decision of international disputes by arbitration. That the Anglo-French war-aims are sincerely and honourably intended is confirmed by the attitude of these Governments before and during the war, above all by their attitude at the Hague Conferences when they sought to attain by treaty what to-day they proclaim as their war-aim, now that they have been constrained to resort to force.

The sudden conversion of the German Chancellor from a politician of violence into a politician of peace strikes me, however, in an entirely different light. The man who a few months ago imprinted a German peace upon his war banner will meet with but little belief and confidence if he now suddenly sticks in one pocket the black-white-red flag, on which the war-map was inscribed as the measure of peace, and draws from the other a white flag of peace, bearing as its symbol the peaceful balance of Themis in place of the sharp, gleaming sword. The change has taken place with too astonishing a suddenness to be credible. The contrast which it offers to all that this same German Chancellor has said and done during the whole of his period of office is too glaring to inspire confidence. The man who tossed aside and left unanswered the Tsar's proposal to obtain a decision by the Hague Tribunal, and who later, from a consciousness of guilt, suppressed it in his White Book—the man who declined Grey's Conference of the four Powers, the surest guarantee of peace, on the inane pretext that it looked like an "Arcopagus," like a European Tribunal before which he could not summon his ally—the man who even now has the temerity to describe as subsidiary questions the most important proposals advanced for a solution of the Austro-Serbo-Russian conflict (the Russian proposal for arbitration and the English proposal for a conference) and seeks to dispose of these with a few hackneyed words—this man expects to find confidence when he now resheathes the sword, and steps before the public gently waving the palms of peace. Others, if they chose, may show him this confiding spirit, and there are in fact certain pacifists who could not restrain themselves in their joyful enthusiasm



over the converted Chancellor. For my part I receive the present statements of Herr von Bethmann with that scepticism which is felt towards the whimpering assurance of an incorrigibly bad boy who pleads for forgiveness on the ground that he won't do it again.

I am glad that in discussing war-aims in this book I have chosen the chronological method which follows step by step the changing war events and the war-aims which also change according to the military situation for the time being. *Tempora (militaria) mutantur nos et mutamur in illis*. Since the Chancellor's speech of December 9th, 1915, which forms the first subject of my discussion, almost a year has now passed until his last speech of November 9th, 1916. Anyone who compares that December speech of 1915, and above all the April speech of 1916, with the last November speech, will regard it as impossible that the same man can in good faith, honesty and sincerity have delivered these earlier speeches as well as the later one. There is only one explanation for this change. Despite all apparent successes, all palliations and all suppression of the truth, the military and economic situation of Germany must have become so grave, the problem of feeding the German people must have become so difficult under the increasing pressure of the blockade, the feeling among broad masses of the people must have become so much opposed to war (as is indicated by many facts which have not become public) that the German Government under compulsion is obliged to approximate to the war conditions of the Entente Powers in order in this way to facilitate the entry into peace negotiations. Herr von Bethmann is obliged to descend from his high war-steed and assume the peace-level, on which he hopes to meet his former enemies. The proposal to dictate peace on the basis of the war map appears to have been definitely abandoned in Berlin, because they are convinced that they are no longer in a position to dictate peace. Since their opponents are only prepared to conclude a pacifist peace, they must perforce agree to become pacifist themselves, *pacifiste par force majeure, pacifiste malgré soi*. It is not a spontaneous act of his own will and his inner conviction that have transformed Herr von Bethmann in the seven months from



April to November, 1916, into an adherent and a prophet of an international league of peace; the change has been accomplished by the force of facts which even a German Chancellor cannot escape. The peace which will be concluded with Germany on a pacifist basis will be a peace resting on force in so far as Germany by the force of military and economic conditions will be compelled to submit at last, after decades of resistance, to the domination of right in international life.

It is still open to question whether the present statements of Herr von Bethmann will lead to this end so ardently desired by the whole world. Just as Germany has hitherto sought to base its peace of violence on real guarantees, so also those world Powers which join the International League of Peace will demand real guarantees for their peace which will rest on a foundation of law. In the first place they will abolish the abortion of the new Kingdom of Poland—which really represents a fourth partition of the unfortunate country—and they will accomplish the new creation of a truly independent Polish State on the basis of the free will of the people. They will restore Belgium and Serbia, these small States so unjustly attacked, to the enjoyment of their complete sovereignty and independence in order once for all to level the ground on which the future palace of peace can be securely raised. Other territorial questions, in particular that of Alsace-Lorraine, they will regulate on the principle of the nations' free right of self-determination—a principle which must be one of the essential foundations of the International League of Peace. They will forbid every special coalition of individual Powers—whether it be in the form of an alliance, an Entente, or of any other more intimate union—since such special alliances would negative and endanger the general League.

Above all, however, the Powers which join the International League of Peace will have to draw the most important and the most pregnant consequences from the new organisation of law. Armaments, by land and sea, will be subjected to a treaty agreement, to a simultaneous proportional reduction. That is the most important real guarantee of the future league of peace. On this point Herr von Beth-



mann has remained silent. That is the crucial point which will demonstrate whether Germany is really prepared, honourably and sincerely, to follow hand in hand with the other peace-Powers the path leading to an international peace organisation of civilised humanity, or whether it will continue to pursue its former path of seeking guarantees for its own military power. A peace-organisation without a reduction of armaments by treaty is worthless and meaningless. The continuation of the competition in armaments would not merely completely plunge into the economic gulf the nations which are already bankrupt, but it would conjure up anew all the dangers of the former international anarchy, and would again merely create a latent condition of war in place of a real peace. An international peace organisation, without a restriction of armaments resting on treaty, is like a knife without a blade, wanting a handle. It would be merely a phantom without any real value or substance. If, therefore, Germany is sincerely anxious for the international league for the preservation of peace proclaimed by Bethmann, it should state that it also wants the most essential attribute of this league, that is to say, the reduction by treaty of armaments by sea and land. I am anxious to know what answer the German Government will give when the question is put to them in this form. If I were an English or a French Minister I should regard it as of the utmost urgency and importance to address in the most precise form, in open reply to Bethmann's speech, this question of armaments to the despots of Germany. That is the touch-stone of the sincerity of Germany's desire for peace. This water-shed will show in what direction German tendencies are flowing. Here the German statesmen would be obliged to show their true colours, here they would have to show whether they are striving merely for a compulsory peace for the time being, occasioned by the restraint of their situation and by the hopelessness of gaining a real victory, or whether they are seeking for a real enduring European peace. It is on this question of armaments that the two spirits will part company.

I said I was anxious to know the German answer. In reality I am not inquisitive as to the answer itself, the



inner substance of which I can with certainty foresee, but only as to the pretexts and the cloaks to which resort will be had in attempting to conceal the true meaning of the answer. So long as the question at issue is merely the general formula of concurrence in an international League of Peace, consent will be easy and void of consequences. If Germany can maintain and further develop her military power and that of her allies as may seem good, she will be able on any given occasion to whistle at the League of Peace, and tear up the treaty of agreement as a "scrap of paper," just as she did with the German League in 1866 at what appeared to her the favourable moment. A general concurrence in the idea of the League of Peace sounds wonderfully beautiful, and is not unskillfully contrived for the purpose of taking the wind out of the sails of the English statesmen who both before and during the war have always supported this idea. Now, however, the essential point is to draw the consequences from this general consent. It is not merely that the armaments of all the members of the League of Peace must be diminished, but the League of Peace itself must be equipped with full executive powers and with the corresponding machinery for carrying out its decisions. What is your attitude, Germany, to these questions? Are you prepared not merely to found the League of Peace, but also to make it effective to such a degree that its decisions must be respected by everyone concerned? These are the questions with which the German Chancellor, after his speech, must now at once be confronted point by point. The answer to these questions will show whether Germany is prepared honourably and sincerely to co-operate in a higher organisation of humanity above the individual States.

I have myself no doubt that the answer, while it will not indeed be negative—it is necessary to keep up appearances!—will at any rate be evasive—just like Jagow's evasive answer on July 31st to the English inquiry regarding the observation of Belgian neutrality, or shall we say, like Bethmann's present statements regarding German intentions in the matter of Belgium. It is not proposed, we are told, that Belgium should be annexed but still, for the sake of the security of Germany's Western frontier,



it must be subjected to certain restrictions on its sovereignty and independence.

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I have all the more reason to disbelieve in the sincerity of Germany's pacifism with all its essential consequences, in view of the fact that the most recent act of violence on the part of Germany and Austria, the so-called "liberation" of Poland, is the most anti-pacifist action conceivable. It is anti-pacifist, not merely on account of its material contents, but more particularly so, because of the reasons officially advanced. Herr von Bethmann, who on November 9th revealed himself to the astonished world as a brand new pacifist, had four days previously, on November 5th, while the war was still in progress and before a definitive decision had been reached, undertaken an annexationist act of violence which is unique in history. By a one-sided act of violence he wrenched from its former sovereign a land occupied in the course of war, which according to the principles of international law is still the property of the enemy until the conclusion of peace, and without consulting its population made of it an ostensibly independent State, although in reality it was a vassal State, dependent on Germany. I have elsewhere referred in detail to the unprecedented violation of international law involved in this transaction. At this point, in discussing the most recent pacifist programme of the German Chancellor, I am only interested in the utterly anti-pacifist reasons advanced for the liberation of Poland. As far back as his speech in April, 1916, the Chancellor had undisguisedly pointed out that in the interests of the security of the German Eastern frontier the Russian Baltic Provinces and Poland could not be again restored to Russia. This reason was expressly repeated in the official constitution of the new Polish State of November 5th, and in all the official and semi-official commentaries on this document. The new Kingdom is constituted "in adhesion" to Germany and Austria having "due regard to the well-being and the security" of these countries.

Beyond all the pros and the cons—so runs the commentary of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* already mentioned in an earlier



passage—there stands imperiously the principle that for the sake of our own future we durst not allow Poland to be restored to Russia. Germany's security demands that for all time to come Russian armies should not be able to break into the Empire and divide Silesia from East and West Prussia, issuing from a Poland constructed as a starting point for military sallies. . . . In short, strongly protected frontiers will form the firmest foundation for a quiet relationship to our Russian neighbour.

Germany's security! A starting point for military sallies for the Russian armies! Shorter, strongly protected frontiers the firmest foundation for peace! These are the points of view with which the pacifist Herr von Bethmann justifies the annexation of Poland in the new-fangled form of a daughter Kingdom. Is that not just the old, very old, language of the previous international anarchy with guarantees based on power, which seeks an effective protection of peace merely in better guarded frontiers and in a stronger military and strategic situation? Is there, in the reasons thus advanced for the annexation of the Polish Kingdom, so much as a glimmer of a pacifist idea? Is it not as if the language of November 5th had issued from the lips of an entirely different man from that of November 9th? Does not the idea of military guarantees against possible attacks from Russia furnish the strongest contrast to the idea of a perpetual guarantee of peace by an international organisation resting on law? If Bethmann's ideas of November 9th were intended to be realised, if the Chancellor sincerely pursues their realisation and believes in them, how could he, four days previously, commit an act of violence which not only imperils the future organisation of peace and indeed makes it impossible, but in its motives is in flagrant contradiction to the essential ideas of this organisation? What purpose will the international peace organisation have served, what success will attend it if every State at the same time—acting, indeed, in advance as Germany has done—seeks to secure territorial guarantees against hostile attacks? The act of violence of November 5th is the absolute negation of the peace proclamation of November 9th. Herr von Bethmann again disowns himself. As in my book I contrasted the Bethmann of August 4th with the Bethmann of December 2nd, 1914, so now I summon the Chancellor of November 5th, 1916,



against the Chancellor of November 9th, and I leave it to these two distinguished gentlemen to tear each other to pieces.

As it is so often possible to judge correctly of one's own actions only when seen reflected in others, I should like to put the following case hypothetically to the German Chancellor with the object of proving to him the enormous inconsistency and contradictoriness of his actions of November 5th and November 9th. Let us assume that in the course of this war Russia had made a military conquest of the Prussian province of Posen and of Austrian Galicia and had occupied them. Suppose that one fine day, in accordance with the promises given by him at the beginning of the war, the Tsar had proclaimed the constitution of a new kingdom of Poland, comprising Russian Poland, Prussian Posen and Austrian Galicia—a Poland of approximately the same extent as the old kingdom, a Poland complete in itself and therefore better than that established by Germany and Austria, the new kingdom being made dependent on Russia. Suppose, further, that the Tsar explained his act of violence on the grounds of the necessity of securing a better protection of his Western frontiers, of the creation of a buffer-State against future German attacks, and that during the war he gave practical effect to this proposal for securing better protection by compelling German and Austrian subjects of Polish nationality to take up arms against their former countries under the guise of a voluntary action. Assume that four days after this act of violence the leading Russian Minister had delivered a pompous European peace speech, in which he stated his readiness to enforce by land and on sea the principles of law and of free development—these are the words of the German Chancellor—and to place himself at the head of a peaceful league of the nations, etc. Would not the hypocritical statements of the Russian statesman have evoked peals of derisive laughter, not merely in Germany and in Austria, but in the whole neutral world as well, more particularly in America, the leading land of pacifism? Is there anyone in the whole world who would have believed in the sincerity of a pacifism which had been <sup>so</sup> disowned a few days previously



by the crassest act of anti-pacifism? The idea of the buffer-State, the idea of rendering the frontier secure in a military sense is *vieux jeu* of the oldest style. The idea of the organisation of the nations on a basis of law is *nouveau jeu* of the newest style. A combination of the two trains of thought is logically excluded; a simultaneous execution of both is a practical impossibility. If Germany, the aggressor, needs a buffer-State on the side of Russia, how is it possible to refuse France, the party attacked, a buffer-State on the side of Germany? The organisation of the European nations on a basis of law is designed to make any buffer-State a superfluity. That is the only meaning and purpose of this organisation. Law is to be the buffer which will prevent collisions and render superfluous any buffer of a material nature.

The pacifism manifested and proclaimed by Herr von Bethmann on November 5th and 9th, 1916, is the pacifism of power. We, however, want the power of pacifism. Between the two banks there is no bridge.

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So much by way of appraising the most recent of Bethmann's peace-aims from the European standpoint.

Their appraisement is, however, entirely different from the standpoint of the German people.

The fact that in November, 1916, after 27 months of war, the German Chancellor, under the stress of military and economic conditions, seeing no prospect of being able to dictate a German peace to the enemies of Germany, assumed the pacifist point of view which for decades had been put forward by the leading statesmen of the Entente, with the Tsar of Russia at their head, as the only possible sure foundation for the peace of Europe;

the fact that the unspeakable horrors of more than two years' international butchery, that the horrors of an unprecedented destruction of wealth had first to visit the most civilised parts of the world before the German statesman arrived at the recognition of a fact which had long been clear to the statesmen of England, France, Russia, America, Belgium, Holland, etc., and generally to the most progressive



minds of the whole world—the recognition of the necessity of an organisation of the nations on a basis of law in place of the former principle of force ;

the fact that during the twelve critical days the war could have been avoided with ease had Herr von Bethmann then recognised the efficacy of the weapons of pacifism, which to-day he recommends as balm for the wounds inflicted on humanity,—

all these facts justify the German people in demanding from its rulers and statesmen an account of their actions and their omissions.

If Bethmann's present war-aims were really sincerely intended, if they were really meant to pave the way to peace-negotiations and in the end lead to peace, this would be a consummation which should certainly be hailed joyfully and cordially from the standpoint of Europe and from the standpoint of humanity. From the standpoint of the German people, however, the crimes that have been committed merely become all the greater by virtue of the fact that the perpetrator by his present attitude acknowledges them himself. In the question of guilt he still lies. His denials neither move us nor exculpate him, since the demonstrations of his guilt have been strictly furnished. On the question of war-aims, however, he confesses. If to-day it is true that the peace of Europe can be guaranteed only by a pacifist organisation of the European family of nations, it was also true in 1899, in 1907, and in the following years ; above all it was true in the last days of July, 1914. If to-day international disputes can and ought to be submitted in future to the decision of arbitration, then the Austro-Serbo-Russian dispute at the end of July, 1914, could also have been referred to the Hague Tribunal for decision. For nearly twenty years the German Government—of course with the unflinching support of their Austrian ally—have repudiated all pacifist ideas ; they have always scoffingly contrasted such " Utopias " with the " Real " politics which could alone be justified ; they have offered inexorable opposition to all practical proposals in



a pacifist direction, and have found Germany's salvation only in the sharp, gleaming sword and the shining armour. The bloodiest war in the history of mankind had first to rage over the world for more than two years before the German statesmen recognised what the rest of the civilised world had already recognised in peace, what they had striven with unwearying zeal to accomplish despite all the opposition of Germany. That the path pursued by Germany in all these past years was a mistaken path is a fact admitted by Herr von Bethmann, if his utterances of November 9th are sincerely intended. It is these mistaken paths which have plunged Germany and the world into this unspeakable disaster. They prepared the ground for the war, they provoked the war, and they have prolonged it for more than two years down to the present day. What the Chancellor said on November 9th is merely the repentant sinner's confession of guilt. That he confesses is well; it is better for the prospects of peace that he should do so rather than that he should remain obdurate. But the guilt is not expiated by the confession. The triple guilt for which the German people has still to call its Rulers and Governors to account is:

The guilt in the past, the guilt in the present, the  
guilt in the future.

This guilt in the future—as I have already explained elsewhere—also exists in its full dimensions, even if under the pressure of external circumstances it cannot be committed. In Spring, 1916, the Chancellor was still willing, and in November he still announced by his actions that he was willing, to dictate to his opponents, whom he believed that he would be able to conquer, a German peace, that is to say a peace resting on force. His will was directed to establishing anew a so-called state of peace, resting on cannons and bayonets, that is to say to the perpetuation of international anarchy in Europe. This will in itself represents the crime against the future. It was only the power, the military and economic power, that was wanting to the German statesmen to enable them to convert their will into action. This explains the sudden



change from the path of violence to the path of peace.  
The guilt is not thereby wiped out.

Germany by her action before the war prepared  
the ground for the war.

Germany herself provoked the war.

Germany intended to establish anew a latent state  
of war in Europe, and this intention was only shattered  
on the power of her opponents.

For this triple guilt the German people will call to  
account those who are responsible.



## CHAPTER III

### BETHMANN THE OFFERER OF PEACE<sup>1</sup>

WITH the foregoing chapters on "Bethmann the Annexationist" and "Bethmann the Pacifist" I believed that I had completed the last section of my book which deals with War-aims. The manuscript was already finished, when the German peace-offer of December 12th, 1916, was made, and the important discussions between the belligerent and neutral States ensued.

An exhaustive treatment of this far-reaching subject, which, by virtue of the intervention of the United States of America and President Wilson's monumental outline of an organised community of peace of all civilised States, has gained a significance for the future life of the nations reaching far beyond the present war—a detailed and comprehensive treatment of this world-moving and world-determining subject would demand a new book and would considerably exceed the limits of this present work. I reserve this attractive task for a later day. At this point, however, I should not like to omit, at the close of my present work, indicating at least a few fundamental principles according to which, in my opinion, the peace-conditions of belligerent parties in general, and those of the parties now at war in particular, must be judged.

This examination appeared to me indispensable in view

<sup>1</sup> Written in April, 1917, and amplified by some later additions.

<sup>2</sup> The three first volumes of *The Crime* are followed by a further volume, conceived as an Appendix, *Belgian Documents*. This treats of the Belgian Ambassadorial Reports published by the German Government, in connection with the two Belgian Grey Books and other publications on the Belgian side.



of the more recent attempts made by the German Government and the defenders of their innocence to replace and obliterate the original question of guilt, that is to say the question of the authorship of the war, by a new question of guilt—by the question : “ Who is responsible for the continuation of the war ? ” The line of argument runs as follows :

It is true that we are innocent of the provocation of the war. But even if we had been guilty, our initial guilt would be outweighed by the consequential guilt of our opponents, who have declined the peace offered by us, and have thereby led to the continuation of the war.

In his speech of January 31st, 1917, before the Main Committee of the Reichstag (in which unrestricted submarine warfare was announced) the Chancellor gave expression to this train of thought in the following words :

“ On December 12th I explained in the Reichstag the considerations which led to our offer of peace. The answer of our opponents was sharply and decisively to the effect that they refuse to negotiate with us on the subject of peace, that the only peace with which they will have anything to do is a peace which they themselves dictate. In the eyes of all the world this suffices to decide the question of the guilt for the continuance of the war. The guilt rests on our enemies alone.”

In order to demonstrate the untenability of this subtly devised proof of innocence, it is necessary to establish certain general principles according to which offers of peace should be judged, and in the light of these principles to answer the particular questions which have reference to the present war.

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I have already explained elsewhere that in itself, and as a question of principle, no exception can be taken to the



argument to the effect that a party which provoked the war need not be held unconditionally responsible for the continuance of the war at every subsequent stage. At some definite point in time the perpetrator may very well decide to put an end to the continued operation of the consequences of his deed, and this decision may exonerate him from the responsibility for the consequences which may ensue later. The motives leading to such a decision may be various in character; the actor may be smitten with penitence on seeing the fearful consequences of his action; he may have become convinced of the greater or less degree of failure attending his action, and of the absence of any prospect of attaining his ends; in view of the course taken by events he may be apprehensive that his action will not only remain without success, but may even produce the contrary results and thus place him in a worse position than before.

The motives of the party so acting are no doubt relevant in judging the question from a moral standpoint, but not in regarding it from a political point of view. Whether the motives are generally of a humane character or of a purely egotistical nature, the only decisive consideration for us in judging the question is whether the party responsible for war has by his offer of peace manifested a sincere desire to efface those consequences of his action which have already supervened, and at the same time to put an end to its continued operation.

The analogy of criminal law is applicable in this case also. The imperial criminal code (§ 46) grants immunity to the perpetrator of an action if before its discovery "he has by his own exertion averted the beginning of the consequences appertaining to the completion of the crime or offence." Under the general formula of "mitigating circumstances" (the limits of which are not specially defined) it admits a more lenient punishment where the offender by his later action, by repentance, confession, restitution, or attenuation of the consequences, etc., recommends himself to the indulgence of the Court. Anyone who manifested a firm will to make good all the former consequences of his action and to avert all its further consequences, but who should be precluded from carrying out



his good intentions by the selfishness, the thirst for revenge, the malice of the party injured, will doubtless not escape unpunished, but a relatively lenient punishment will certainly be imposed upon him by any just judge.

It is on the basis of this entirely apt analogy, drawn from the internal life of the State, that we must judge the relationship of belligerent Powers to each other, when the one makes an offer of peace and the other declines it. Here also the essential questions are :

*In the first place :* Who is the culprit ; that is to say, the aggressor ? Who is the party injured ; that is to say, on whom has the attack been made ?

*In the second place :* Has the aggressor in fact made an offer of peace ?

*In the third place :* Was the offer of peace of such a character that it was calculated to repair the consequences of the deed which had already supervened, and to prevent further consequence to the detriment of the injured party ?

The answers to these three preliminary questions automatically furnish the answer to the main question, whether the party who has been attacked and injured could accept the offer of peace, or at least whether he could or ought to enter into negotiations on the subject. And this again furnishes the final determination of the question whether the party offering or the party refusing is responsible for the continuance of the war.

Applied to the present war, the above three questions run as follows :

1. Who is the aggressor in this war, and who is the party attacked ? Is it the Central Powers or the Entente Powers ?

2. Have Germany and her Allies in fact made an offer of peace to their enemies ?

3. If so, was their offer of peace, having regard to the circumstances, of such a character that the enemies of the Central Powers could accept it, or was it such that they could or ought even to go so far as to enter into negotiations on the subject ?



## THE SALIENT POINT IN JUDGING OF PEACE CONDITIONS.

The salient point in passing a critical judgment on the peace conditions of belligerent parties is the investigation of the origin of the war ; it is the question of guilt : Who has provoked the war ? Who is the aggressor, and who is the defender ?

If both parties in the course of a war include the conquest of foreign territories in their programme as to war-aims, this demand, which is materially and qualitatively the same in both parties, must nevertheless be subjected from the political and ethical standpoint to a fundamentally different judgment in the two cases. Essentially this divergence depends on which of the two parties is the aggressor and which the defender. *Si duo faciunt idem, non est idem.*

Let us assume—to take an example from private life—that a landed proprietor had, contrary to law, broken into the enclosed possession of his neighbour, that he had brought the other man's property wholly or partly within his power, that he had burned down a portion of the buildings, destroyed the fields and the woods, partly massacred and partly deported the inhabitants, and in any case had brought them all to beggary. And now, having become the happy possessor of the estate he has despoiled, suppose that he suddenly stretches out the hand of peace, appealing to the horrors and the brutality which the continuance of such a struggle must bring with it, and that he speaks as follows to his neighbour : “ It was not I who attacked you, but you who attacked me. Nevertheless I in no way intend to annihilate or crush you, but I need ‘ guarantees for my future.’ Give me a portion of your property ; compensate me for the cost which has fallen upon me, and I am quite ready to conclude peace with you. Indeed in the future we shall be the best of friends.”

Such an offer of peace, when made by the victorious aggressor, merely signifies a desire to remain in possession—or at any rate in partial possession—of the estate he has unjustly acquired—and thus to confer subsequent legalisation on his crime by securing the concurrence of the party



who has been attacked and injured. It signifies a further desire to render possible and to facilitate similar successful attacks in future, as time and circumstances may permit.

Quite a different aspect is assumed by such an offer of peace when it proceeds from the party attacked, assuming that he has proved victorious. Let us assume that the attack has more or less miscarried, that it has been possible for the party attacked to eject the inbreaker from his property, and that the party attacked now demands what the aggressor had demanded in the former case: that is to say, he demands acknowledgment of the fact that he has been unjustly attacked, he requires compensation for the attack and security against future attacks by territorial concessions or by other appropriate measures. In other words he demands the restoration of his property, compensation for the damage sustained and a guarantee against future disturbances.

No one will dispute the justification of such demands when put forward by the party attacked. No one will admit that they are justified when advanced by the aggressor.

From this it follows that the question whether demands in the matter of war-aims are or are not justified depends essentially on the questions: Who provoked the war? Who is the aggressor? Who is the defender?

With this question of the justification or the absence of justification of the war-aims proclaimed by one side or the other, there is intimately connected the further question: "Who is responsible for the continuance of the war?" In discussing this latter question it is of course necessary not to lose sight of the fact that the continuation of the war is merely a consequence of its beginning, and that therefore he who has provoked the war is in a general sense also responsible for its consequences, although only to the extent and up to the time when he may be prepared to remove these consequences and prevent their continued operation. It follows then that the side which, as its originator, is responsible for the provocation of a war, may nevertheless as from some definite later date be innocent of its continuation. The exoneration from this second guilt



presupposes however that it is not merely *any* peace that is offered, but such a peace as I have defined above ; a peace offering restitution, compensation and guarantees.

If the aggressor offers such a peace and the party attacked declines it, then no doubt it could be said that from this moment the aggressor is no longer responsible for the continuation of the struggle.

#### PEACE-DEMANDS OF THE AGGRESSOR.

#### PEACE-DEMANDS OF THE PARTY ATTACKED.

It is from this point of view that judgment must be passed on Germany's offer to enter into peace-negotiations with her enemies (December 12th, 1916) and on the ensuing events.

Germany's offer contradicts in every point the governing lines indicated above. Consequently the present solemn declaration of the German Rulers and Governments that they are not responsible for the continuance of the war is in every respect erroneous.

In the first place, any detailed account of the conditions of peace is completely absent from the German offer. In declining Wilson's proposal that the neutrals should be admitted to the peace-negotiations, Germany states that they mean to negotiate only with their enemies, that they will bring propositions for the conditions of peace to the negotiations, that they mean to secure "the existence, the honour and the freedom of development" of their own peoples, but that it is not their desire either to crush or annihilate their opponents. That is all. It is also in entire agreement with the starting point of the German peace-offer, according to which Germany and her allies "were obliged to take up arms in defence of their existence and the freedom of their national development."

Against Germany's demand for guarantees no objection could in principle be urged, if the fact which it presupposes—the attack on the part of the Entente Powers—were only in point. But since, as I have proved in my books, Germany and her allies are the aggressors, all their demands in the interests of their alleged security—the security of



the aggressor against future attacks!—are shown to be purely aims of conquest, and as such they cannot from the outset be submitted to any serious discussion.

Contrariwise, the peace-conditions of the Entente, which demand the return of conquered territory, compensation for all destruction and devastation, guarantees against future attacks, must on grounds of principle be at once recognised as justified. Here the only question that can arise is as to the assessment of the demands taken individually: whether they are kept within the limits which correspond with their justified aim; whether the methods proposed are or are not proper to the attainment of the end. The judgment to be passed on the demands of the aggressor depends on grounds of principle, and these lead to an absolute rejection of the attainment of any territorial or other acquisitions on the conclusion of peace. The judgment to be passed on the demands of the party attacked depends on considerations of degree and expediency, and these elude any discussion on grounds of principle. Whether the confiscation or the neutralisation of a portion of territory, of a town or a fortification, whether the imposition of a sum by way of indemnities, whether the restriction of future developments in any direction are expedient or inexpedient, whether these measures are too extreme or are restricted within justifiable limits, all these are questions of fact and expediency, which must be answered with special reference to each particular case and each particular object. All such questions of detail must remain outside the field of discussion, as the task we have undertaken is restricted to indicating the governing lines of principle to be applied in judging conditions of peace.

In deciding such questions of expediency, regard must be had to a great number of considerations of fact which may lead to different conclusions according to the value attached to them. After the Napoleonic wars, for example, the allied rulers and governments considered it necessary to banish the great Corsican in the first place to an island in the Mediterranean, and when this was found to be insufficient, to an island in the Atlantic Ocean, in order to procure at last an enduring peace for a Europe rent by



twenty years of war. Will anyone assert that the radical method then adopted to secure peace was either inexpedient or too extreme? Similar necessities may arise after other wars; they may do so even after the present war. By this I mean to say that the scope and the purpose of the conditions which the attacked party may have to impose on his aggressor in order to attain his security in future, may vary according to the circumstances. The same conditions may very well be too lenient in one case and too severe in another. They are, however, always distinguished from the similar peace conditions of the aggressor by the fundamental difference in principle, that the former are demands resting on law, whereas the latter are demands without legal basis.

From all this it follows that an offer of peace from the aggressor which seeks any gain, no matter of what kind, in the form of "guarantees for the future" is no real offer of peace, that it is only intended to create the appearance of such an offer, and that consequently the party attacked, in declining such an offer of peace, is in the right and is not responsible for the continuance of the war.

#### THE GERMAN PEACE DEMANDS.

Even if for good reasons the German Government did not specify their peace conditions, but reserved the right to bring them forward at the peace negotiations, nevertheless the general formulæ of the peace offer of December 12th, 1916—when taken in conjunction with all the earlier and later statements of the German rulers, governments and party leaders—make it sufficiently clear that the peace offered was a conqueror's peace, the conditions which were to be brought forward were conqueror's conditions. To the present day Herr von Bethmann has not retracted anything in his annexationist speeches of December 9th, 1915, and April 5th, 1916. These speeches represent the culminating point, the most pregnant expression of the annexationist tendencies of the German Government, and it is for this reason that I subjected them to more detailed treatment in the foregoing



chapter of this section on "Bethmann the Annexationist."<sup>1</sup> I shall only add here what the Chancellor has said in an annexationist sense before and after these speeches:

On May 28th, 1915, he said in the Reichstag:

The greater the danger which, surrounded as we are by enemies on every side, we are called upon to endure, the more the love of our home grips deep at our hearts, the more we are compelled to think of our children and grandchildren, by so much the more must we hold out until we have created and secured all possible real guarantees and securities that none of our enemies, either separately or in combination, will again venture a passage of arms. Gentlemen, the wilder the storm rages around us, the more firmly must we build our own house.

On August 19th, 1915, he said, again speaking in the Reichstag:

Gentlemen, this enormous world-war which makes the joints of the world gape, will not bring back the conditions that have passed away. A new situation must arise. If Europe is ever to return to tranquillity it can only be by virtue of Germany occupying an impregnable strong position . . .

Germany must build, fortify, and strengthen her position in such a way that the other Powers will never again think of a policy of encirclement.

In his speech of November 9th, 1916, which is discussed in the foregoing chapter, when the Chancellor's tendencies to conquest had already passed their highest point and were beginning to decline, Herr von Bethmann restricted himself to the negative assertion that he "had never described the annexation of Belgium as our (Germany's) intention." In saying this the emphasis is to be laid on the word "annexation," so that all the intentions intimated at an earlier date on the subject of political, military and economic "guarantees of a real nature" against future attacks from the West remain unaltered.

The leaders of all the civil parties, from the Conservatives on the right to the Progressive "Volkspartei" at once hailed the Chancellor's November speech with their habitual chorus of wise observations. On this occasion,

<sup>1</sup> In the appendix to this chapter on "Bethmann and Michaelis" I explain that Herr von Bethmann's successor, Herr Dr. Michaelis, is continuing the annexationist policy of his predecessor with undiminished, and perhaps even with increased, vigour.



as always happens in similar cases, the Social patriots again affected a dullness of hearing. The speakers for the civil parties, however, all expressed their concurrence with the Chancellor, stating that while they did not indeed demand any "annexation" of Belgium, they must still insist on the following points :

Belgium must "never again serve as a door of invasion against Germany ; it must remain in a political, military and economic sense in German hands" (Statement of the representative of the Centre).

"We must protect ourselves in the East and the West by better frontiers : the *status quo ante* cannot return. We must have real guarantees that Belgium does not become the 'bridge-head' for English plans of power on the Continent" (Statement of the representative of the National Liberal Party).

"Belgium must not become the scene of English efforts for power on the Continent ; English influence must be cut down in favour of that of Germany. . . ." (Statement of the representative of the Progressive 'Volkspartei').

"We must see to it that Belgium does not allow herself to be again used as a door of invasion ; he (the speaker) was, however, also in favour of that land being made use of to strengthen our naval power . . . he was further unable to concur in any surrender being made towards France" (Statement of the representative of the Conservative Party).

"By our policy in Belgium, especially towards the Flemings, we have proved that we are possessed of understanding for the needs of the country. This will in future bear its fruit. We want a guarantee that we shall not have to make renewed sacrifices in a few years' time. . . . There was as yet no need to speak of a vassal State. There were other guarantees against a new ruthless attack" (Statement of the representative of the 'Reichspartei').

These statements, made by the civil parties in the Main Committee which represent more than two-thirds of the Reichstag, are almost in verbal agreement and they were



listened to by the Chancellor without evoking any contradiction. Thus his former statements on the subject of Belgium, to which the party leaders expressly appealed, were confirmed and upheld.

In the solemn speech of December 12th, 1916, in which the Chancellor intimated his offer of peace to the enemies of Germany, he prudently avoided any special reference to German acquisitions of territory in the East or the West. As has already been observed above, however, he adhered even on this occasion to the thesis of defence, and the peace proposals which he was to bring with him to the negotiations were defined as being intended to promote "the existence, the honour and the freedom of development of Germany and her allies." The furtherance of this end was also very naïvely to form at the same time "an appropriate basis for the establishment of a lasting peace." It will be conceded that such a prelude about the "war of defence" and the "furtherance of their own freedom of development"—taken in conjunction with a *Te Deum* on the "fight victoriously fought out" and on the "judgment of God" which had fallen upon the enemy (as the Emperor said in Mülhausen immediately after the peace-note of December 12th)—it will be conceded that such a prelude of trumpets could awaken but little hope for the success of the peace concert which was announced.

Meanwhile, so far as Russian Poland was concerned, the so-called guarantee on the East had become a reality by the proclamation of the Kingdom of Poland on November 5th, 1916. With reference to the Russian Baltic provinces, the matter was allowed to rest at the former statements of the Chancellor which made it clear beyond doubt that the intention of the German rulers was to connect large territories in Esthonia, Livonia and Courland with Prussia or with the German Empire.

Meanwhile, after the intervention of the United States who regard it as a *conditio sine qua non* of any conclusion of peace that the independent kingdom of Belgium should receive full restitution and compensation, the game of concealment formerly pursued in connection



with the Belgian question had become impossible. In consequence we again find the Belgian question put forward for discussion, first of all in a veiled form (in the German Note to neutrals of January 12th) and then openly (in the German Note to America of January 31st, 1917). The former Note again put forward the familiar register of sins against the Belgian Government (military dependence on England and France; violation of the spirit of neutrality, etc.). In the latter note addressed to the Government of the United States the old conclusion was once more drawn from these premises: Germany had, indeed, never intended to incorporate Belgium, but "in the peace to be concluded with Belgium its exclusive care would be to make provision so that this country, with which the Imperial Government desires to live in good and neighbourly relations, cannot be exploited by the enemy for the promotion of hostile conspiracies." The necessity of such a precaution is, very remarkably, explained more particularly by reference to the conclusions of the Paris Economic Conference, which had undisguisedly expressed the intention "not to recognise Germany as having equal rights after the re-establishment of peace but rather to continue a systematic fight against her."

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This Note, which is signed not by the Chancellor, who is the sole responsible Minister, but by his subordinate Herr Zimmermann, furnishes as unfavourable a testimony to the skill of the new<sup>1</sup> Foreign Secretary of State as was provided by his attempt to forge a conspiracy with Mexico, and through the mediation of this latter Power with Japan. Such a *gaffe* and at the same time such a stroke of ill luck as this Mexican revelation, has not befallen German diplomacy since the days of the outbreak of war, since the declaration of war against Russia with the assignment of alternative reasons, since the date of the Nürnberg airmen and other incidents of unhappy memory. The Emperor William, the most convinced representative of monarchical legitimacy and of divine right, turns for support to a usurping Mexican president, who a short time ago, like his various competitors,

<sup>1</sup> Who has meanwhile already resigned.



was no more than a better class robber chief, and who may perhaps return to his old position to-morrow, if by chance one of his opponents gets the upper hand. And this Mexican bandit is not only himself to come to the rescue of the distressed German Emperor but he is also to bring with him as an ally against America the astute Mikado of Japan, the conqueror of Kiao-chou, the ally of the Entente, the ruler of the "yellow apes," to use the favourite description of the Japanese in Germany since the outbreak of war. What a tragi-comedy! As Nikita of Montenegro was once the "sole friend" of the Ruler of all the Russians, so Carranza of Mexico, rebel and retired robber chief, is now the sole friend (on the other hemisphere) of the Ruler of all the Prussians, the German Emperor by the grace of God.

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The reason assigned by Herr Zimmermann to explain why the well-meaning Imperial Government desires in future to live with Belgium in good neighbourly relations—something like the relationship of the wolf to the neighbouring sheep-pen!—is on the same level of adroitness as the action taken to establish a Mexican-Japanese alliance. The Paris Economic Conference had resolved "to continue a systematic fight against Germany"—hence the necessity imposed on Germany to secure herself in and through Belgium against hostile conspiracies. What does this mean? If the Entente Powers are in fact willing and able to continue the economic struggle against Germany after the conclusion of peace, is it possible to place any obstacle in the way of this struggle by any "guarantee" created in Belgium? Is economic warfare the same thing as the "hostile conspiracies" against which protection must be sought by friendly and neighbourly agreements with Belgium? All these explanations are pretexts of only too transparent a character to conceal the intention not merely to give effect to a simple annexation of the Flemish part of Belgium, but also to force the Walloon part into a state of dependency on the German Empire in a political, military and economic sense. These fine phrases deceived no one, least of all the American



to whom they were addressed and for whose sake the attempt was made to make the bitter Belgian pill palatable by the addition of a certain dose of honey.

Zimmermann's last statements are entirely in agreement with all the earlier declarations of the Chancellor and of the Party Leaders.<sup>1</sup> Germany, which has already "added" Poland in the East and which does not mean to restore the Russian Baltic provinces, continues to entertain the intention of imposing a greater or less degree of restriction on the kingdom of Belgium in its freedom and independence, or at the very least of forcing it into some sort of relationship of dependence on the German Empire. And in making this statement, as the reader will have observed, I leave entirely aside all the more extreme demands of the non-official German annexationists and super-annexationists (see, for example, the memorial of Bissing, the former Governor-General of Belgium, mentioned elsewhere). These extreme groups no doubt constitute a minority in the German people, but they are by no means a minority in the politically influential and authoritative circles of Germany. How far annexationism reaches in these circles may be read in Grumbach's book *Germany's Annexationist Aims*, already mentioned on several occasions. Here I confine myself merely to the official statements of the German Government, which are moreover confirmed by many utterances and proclamations of the German Emperor and of German Princes: The peace conditions which the Chancellor meant to take with him to the Peace Conference—despite all the gentle veiling and padding with well-sounding phrases about forbearance and humanity—were the hard conditions of a victorious conqueror.

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This is also confirmed by the speech delivered by Herr von Bethmann in the Reichstag on February 27th, 1917,

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Michaelis has also expressly stated in his tour of inspection in Belgium to the so-called "Council of Flanders," that there had been no change in the policy of the Imperial Government with regard to Belgium in consequence of the change in the Chancellorship (see Wolff's telegram of August 30th, 1917).



two months after the December offer of peace. The passage on war-aims runs as follows :

Since the discussion of war-aims was allowed much has been written in the Press and much has been said in public assemblies as to the form this peace will assume. In the Prussian representative house there was also on a recent occasion an exhaustive discussion as to whether, and if so what, acquisitions of territory and what guarantees peace must bring us. Decisive as these questions are for our future, deeply as they cannot fail to move men's minds, I should nevertheless consider it inexpedient that I for my part should take part in such debates. So far as I am concerned I cannot make promises nor can I formulate our conditions in a detailed form. Such a procedure would be unfruitful. The enemy rulers have not been backward in doing this. They have given extravagant assurances to each other, but they have not thereby attained anything further than to entangle themselves and their people more deeply in the war. What I could say regarding the direction and the aim of our conditions, I have already repeatedly said : it is to put an end to the war by an enduring peace which will give us compensation for all the injury we have suffered and which will offer to a strong Germany an assured existence and an assured future. That is our aim.

The Chancellor thus expressly refers to his earlier statements on German war-aims, and thus he also adheres to the annexationist aims which were most distinctly advanced in his speeches of December 9th, 1915, and April 5th, 1916. The new point, which he adds in his speech of February 27th, is the demand for "compensation for all the injury suffered." This general, and very ingeniously chosen, expression covers and comprises all possible kinds of compensation, which Germany now or later may be able to demand for the "security of her existence and of her future." A "compensation" may be demanded and paid in money, in land, in political and economic concessions, in restrictions imposed on the freedom and independence of neighbouring nations, or in a thousand various forms and degrees. The most important payments of compensation in the East and West, Germany, as we have seen, has created in advance by the creation of the new Polish vassal State, and by the administrative preparation for the annexation of Flemish Belgium. What Germany will further demand under the title of "compensation for injury suffered," if it is in a position to demand, need not again be discussed in this place ;



from my previous dissertations and from annexationist literature we are already sufficiently acquainted with the plans of the rulers of Germany. All that the Chancellor has previously said "on the direction and the aim of the German peace-conditions," he adheres to, without any restrictions, in his speech of February 27th.

As usual, the chorus of the leaders of the civil parties at once fastened on to the heels of the Chancellor, and each of these leaders has interpreted the oracular utterances of the Chancellor in accordance with his special wishes and efforts, sometimes assigning a narrower and sometimes a wider meaning. The common denominator of all the calculations made by the leaders of the civil parties is, however, this: "Compensation for the criminal attack, and real securities against future attacks." Following their usual custom, the Social patriots were on this occasion once more dull of hearing; the affliction in their auditory organs has gradually developed into an incurable deafness.

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In the previous chapter on "Bethmann, the Annexationist," I have already discussed the Chancellor's speech of May 15th, 1917. In this place I would only again point out that on this occasion the Chancellor once more expressly referred to his war-aims already proclaimed in the Reichstag, and added: "I have adhered to these principles without modification." After the Chancellor's speech, the representative Dr. Spahn, in the name of the Centre Party, the progressive "Volkspartei," the National Liberal party and the majority of the German Socialists, made a statement expressing their concurrence, which like the former statements of the groups in question accepted the standpoint of Bethmann's annexationism:

The Chancellor has described his aims in former speeches. We are in agreement with him when he now declines in the present conditions to expose to our enemies the details of his war-aims. It is enough for us if those who govern the Empire neither pursue boundless plans of conquest nor bind themselves to the idea of a peace without annexations and without war indemnities.

Thus, then, "boundless" plans of annexation are repudiated. The same, however, is true of the renunciation



of plans of annexation in general. In other words the aims of conquest of the German Empire should, according to the wishes of these civil parties, be kept within certain limits—within the limits which the Chancellor indicated in his former speeches; that is to say, Belgium, Poland, the Russian Baltic provinces, etc. The Conservatives, who on this occasion did not participate in the joint statement of the civil parties, remained aloof, merely because Bethmann's annexationism does not go nearly far enough to please them. They occupy, as is well known, the platform of the Pan-German programme of world conquest. In the Reichstag sitting of May, 1917, we are thus confronted with the same picture as on every other occasion. The whole of Germany continues to assert that it is waging a war of defence; the whole of Germany needs for its future security increase of territory, and it is only as to the extent of this increase that opinions vary.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE PEACE DEMANDS OF THE ENTENTE POWERS.

These demands of the aggressor and the conqueror are contrasted with the demands of the parties attacked, whose lands are still in part in the power of the aggressor. Their demands are laid down in the two Notes of the Entente Powers of December 30th, 1916, and January 10th, 1917—in the former in a general form, in the latter in a more precise statement.

As I have elsewhere proved, from the beginning of the war and to-day more than ever there has stood in the forefront of the peace demands of the Entente Powers the pacifist world programme: the demand for a league of nations to guarantee and secure the peace of the world on the basis of law in place of violence—a league which will be equipped with the necessary means of compulsion for giving effect to its organisation of law, which will exclude

<sup>1</sup> I shall consider later (Appendix: "Bethmann and Michaelis") the famous resolution of the Reichstag Majority passed on July 19th, 1917, in favour of an understanding, which contradicts all the former announcements of the civil parties during the first three years of war, and I shall also discuss the attitude of the new Chancellor towards this resolution.



the right of military self-help in the case of its individual members, and which will have as a logical consequence the proportionate reduction of the armaments of all States. This dominant pacifist section of the Entente programme has advanced more than ever into the foreground by virtue of the adhesion of the United States to the group of the Entente Powers and by the victory of the Russian Revolution over Tsarism. Neither America nor the new-born Russia is in this war seeking any special advantages whatever, whether of a territorial or of any other nature. Their express and exclusive aim is the organised assurance of the world's peace, which can only be placed on a firm and enduring basis by the exclusion of any annexation resting on violence, any oppression or restriction of free nations. There is no doubt that the co-operation of these two greatest and most powerful republics in the world in the peace programme of the Entente Powers, on which a new agreement will be necessary, will lead to a material modification of this programme, and will remove from it any remnant of aims of force and conquest. Even now, while I am writing these lines (May, 1917), this development is progressing. Already we see that the English and French statesmen are surrendering certain territorial demands in their programme, to which they had been forced by Imperial Russia, and that they also are recognising as their essential war-aim the leading American-Russian peace-formula : a league of nations ; no annexations and no levies.

In these circumstances I consider myself relieved from the necessity of considering in detail the Notes of the Entente Powers of December, 1916, and January, 1917, so far as they contain the special peace demands of the individual allies. The discussion of all these individual questions would extend far beyond the limits of this final recapitulatory chapter of my book. Such a discussion would also be purposeless, because it relates to a subject which is in a state of constant flux in consequence of the new grouping on the side of the Entente Powers and has already assumed an altered form as a result of the events which have ensued. For me personally there is further the decisive consideration that I repudiate on principle



all territorial alterations and transpositions which do not rest on the free and the freely expressed will of the nations, all Imperialist considerations of political power, no matter from what side they are advanced. The question of future military security—the chief consideration which is ordinarily advanced in connection with such demands—does not exist for me. It cannot exist for me, as I regard every drop of blood shed in this war as having been shed in vain, if in the future also the security of States is to rest on a military guarantee and not a guarantee of law. The nations are not entrenchments; they are not bulwarks so that the one can be applied to protect the other. They are not the objects, but the subjects, of the formation of States. Each one in its own right has to determine its own destiny, it has to govern itself within, and maintain its freedom and independence without. These are the old democratic pacifist principles, which have now been introduced into practical statecraft by President Wilson and the Russian Revolution. These are the principles which dispose of all opportunist Imperialist considerations, which at a stroke lead us from the narrow horizon of the egotism of the individual State into the free atmosphere of the interests of the world and of humanity.

#### GENERAL PRINCIPLES IN JUDGING THE PEACE DEMANDS OF THE AGGRESSOR AND OF THE PARTY ATTACKED.

The purpose of my observations in this final chapter is not the discussion of the individual peace-aims of this or of that party but only, as I have already pointed out in the Introduction, the determination of certain guiding lines, according to which the demands of belligerent parties in general are to be judged, according to the *rôle* which the one party or the other plays in the war in question. The demands of the aggressor are to be judged differently from those of the party attacked. Even if externally they may appear more or less the same, the two are nevertheless, internally and in their essence, fundamentally different and they are therefore to be appraised on a different standard, not only from the point of view of international law but also from that of ethics. Proceeding from this



criterion I propose in the following paragraphs to develop a kind of theory for judging the peace conditions of an aggressor on the one hand and of the party attacked on the other, to provide a critical guide for the present peace discussions and for the later peace negotiations. The principles are in their universality entirely independent of the military course of events, that is to say of the greater or less degree in which it is practicable to give effect to the peace conditions in question.

I summarise this theory in six principles.

*First Principle.*—The aggressor in a war is never entitled, whether his attack ends in success or failure, to demand from the party attacked compensation of any kind in the political, the military, the economic or any other sphere.

*Second Principle.*—The party attacked is entitled to demand restitution to his previous position (*restitutio in integrum*); in addition to this, complete compensation for all the damage suffered; finally, adequate guarantees and securities against future attacks.

*Third Principle.*—If the aggressor—in violation of the above principles (Nos. 1 and 2)—offers a peace, which, instead of complying with the justifiable demands of the party attacked, still seeks gains of any kind for himself the aggressor, such a step does not really constitute a peace offer, but is merely a specious offer. When, therefore, the party attacked declines such an offer, and continues the struggle, it is not he, but the aggressor, who is responsible for its continuance.

*Fourth Principle.*—If the party attacked, either spontaneously or in answer to a peace offer (real or specious) on the part of the aggressor, puts forward counter-demands, which are kept within the limits of his rights as defined in No. 2 above, his action is not incorrect. If, therefore, the aggressor declines such justifiable demands on the part of his opponent, in this case also it is not the party attacked but the aggressor who is responsible for the continuance of the struggle.

*Fifth Principle.*—If, on the other hand, the aggressor agrees to all the justifiable demands of the party attacked (on



the standard of the principle indicated in 2), and if at the same time he renounces any demand for gain of his own (on the standard of the principle under 1), the refusal of such an offer of peace would transfer the guilt for the continuance of the war to the party attacked.

*Sixth Principle.*—If in their peace-demands the aggressor and the party attacked violate in an equal degree the principles set out under 1 and 2—the aggressor the principle under 1, the party attacked that under 2—the responsibility for the continuance of the war cannot be laid in an overwhelming measure on either of the two sides. So far as the continuance of the war is concerned, their offences on the two sides cancel each other; so far as the beginning of the war is considered, the initial guilt of the aggressor, as the originator of the war, remains unaltered.

Scarcely anyone who thinks logically will dispute the justice of these six principles, no matter in what camp he may be found. Germany and her allies in putting forward their conditions of peace also recognise the justice of the foregoing principles—only they answer differently from their opponents and the whole of the world to-day the question of fact as to who is the aggressor and who is the defender in the present war. In my books I have sufficiently discussed, examined and made clear this question of fact: Germany and her allies are the aggressors; it is their opponents who have been attacked.

Proceeding from this determination of fact, the above six guiding principles should be made the basis in judging the conditions of peace on both sides; and it is on these lines also that we must answer the question: Who is responsible for the continuance of the war? Is it Germany with her so-called offer of peace, or Germany's opponents with their refusal?

#### PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES TO THE PRESENT WAR.

In order to make the question and answer more comprehensible and plastic, let us link our argument to the



example from private life already cited, an example from a time that has fortunately long passed away, when the conditions on which human individuals lived together were on the same low level as is to-day found in the life of the nations—on the level of anarchy and self-help. We have seen how a landed proprietor, greedy for plunder and booty, has penetrated with his followers into the enclosed domain of his neighbour, and how he has taken possession of the other man's belongings. The neighbour, who was not sufficiently prepared for the attack, had in the first place to yield ground to the robber; he begins however to arm himself more and more with a view to the expulsion of the intruder, and he also finds strong allies who are ready to lend him help in securing the restoration of his rights and the punishment of the miscreant. The latter, in view of the growing power of his opponent, sees approaching the danger that the fruits of his misdeed may be wrenched from him, and indeed that a severe punishment and expiation may be laid upon him. Before the dreaded turn of the tide sets in, he therefore at the right moment makes an offer of peace. With eyes pharisaically turned to Heaven, he bemoans "the catastrophe which has injured the most precious achievements of humanity, which threatens with ruin the spiritual and material progress which was the pride of Europe"; he protests that he only seized the sword "in defence of his existence," that he in no way desires to "crush or annihilate" his opponent, whose land he holds in his possession, that he is certainly the conqueror, but that he is generously stretching out the hand of peace to his enemy, in case the latter should be prepared to accept proposals for peace, which would guarantee to him, the aggressor and the offerer of peace, "his existence, his honour and freedom of development" in future. (—These are the terms of the German offer of peace of December 12th, 1916).

Can and will the person who has been attacked and plundered, whose belongings have been burned and devastated, whose people have been murdered—can and will he consider such a peace proposal? He will only do so under compulsion, if every prospect of restitution, compensation, punishment and expiation is definitively



excluded. So long as it is still possible to cherish the slightest hope of gaining his rights, he will continue to struggle and will reject in the bluntest manner this hypocritical peace proposal, which to crime adds mockery and hypocrisy.

He will be all the more inclined to do so, if he has been convinced from the course of the conflict that this so-called peace proposal is not a product of a free will, an impulse of a suddenly awakened nobility of mind, of self-knowledge and self-restraint appearing late in the day, but is merely a consequence of new circumstances, disadvantageous to his opponent, which have instilled into him the trembling fear of a turn of fate, of a final defeat. When the aggressor was still at the height of his success, he held the pistol against the breast of the man he was attacking. Then it was life, and barely that, that he was prepared to allow his victim, and then only if the assaulted graciously surrendered all that the robber demanded. But when the final success began to be in doubt, when the chances of the party attacked gradually began to rise, the aggressor became more and more modest—if not in the essential substance of his peace conditions, at any rate in the manner and form in which they were put forward. In the trumpeting of the victor which had once been so deafening, there began gradually to be heard an under-note of weakness, of failing confidence in success. The stages in this muffling process coincided exactly with the stages of the enemies' increase, with the accession of new forces to the other side. The aggressor, however, continues to strut about like a conqueror, because he is still in possession of the other man's property ; he still demands that some profit should accrue to him from his misdeed ; he has not yet condescended to such a degree of self-restraint as would at least induce him to offer the restoration of the former position as a basis for the conclusion of peace.

And at such a stage, with such an aggressor, is it suggested that the party attacked should willingly and submissively enter into negotiations—negotiations with an aggressor who already begins to feel his increasing weakness, even if he does not yet show it ? Surely not—at this moment of all moments, when the tables are beginning to be turned,



when the victim is beginning to have some prospect of bringing his destroyer to task, of exacting from him restitution and expiation—at such a moment no right-thinking man will ask of him who has been attacked, that he should return his sword to its sheath, that he should leave the robber in possession of a large part of his booty, and that he on his side should renounce all idea of punishment and expiation. Just at such a moment the man who has been assaulted and robbed has a perfect right to turn the tables, to drive the robber out of his possession, to dictate to him the conditions of punishment and expiation in correspondence with the magnitude of his misdeed. If at the victorious beginning of the struggle the robber placed the pistol of the extortioner against the breast of his victim, it is now the sword of the executor of justice with which the man attacked will, in his hour of victory, enforce his inalienable claims.

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If for a moment we leave this simile and contemplate the real events of this war, I would venture to ask everyone, even in Germany, this question : What conditions of peace would Germany have put forward, if it had really been victorious, if its lightning triumphal march through Belgium and France had not been held up by the Battle of the Marne, if Paris, before whose gates the German troops had almost arrived, had then been occupied, if the war in the West had in this way been brought to a victorious conclusion and if, as a result of this, success in the East had also been assured ? What conditions of peace would Germany have advanced, if success had attended the plan of the General Staff, prepared years in advance, for a rapid overthrow of Belgium and France and a slower but an equally certain defeat of Russia, and if, as a result of this success, the undisputed military leadership on the Continent had fallen to the German Empire ? It would have been a case of “ Your purse or your life ! ” The caricature of the enemy rulers which, in the first weeks of presumptuous success in August and September, 1914, was flaunted at all the street corners of Berlin, would have become a reality. I refer to the caricature which showed



the Emperor William with the cuirassier's sword and in top-boots, the ends of his moustache rising in pride, standing erect with an imperious air, while his royal cousins and their presidential ally, the rulers of Russia, England and France, sat in obedient humility at a table to listen, awaiting the orders of the new Dictator of Europe: "Gentlemen, write!" It is unnecessary that I should describe the German peace of victory which the Emperor William would have dictated, had he remained William the Victorious, and not merely William the Bellicose; having seen the present German peace of "understanding," we can form an adequate idea of what it would have been.

Now, however, the tables have been turned and as far as can be foreseen they will be still more turned. The expected German march of victory in France has for the present come to a standstill, indeed, it has in places become a strategic concentration in the rear. The war-map is slowly changing, but it is doing so step by step to the disadvantage of Germany.<sup>1</sup> The spectre of failure, indeed of final defeat, of the return home without glory and without booty, with empty pockets and empty hands, the leering spectre of their own destruction (after the destruction of millions of their German countrymen which they have unscrupulously compassed—foreigners need not be counted), the gaunt, hollow-eyed spectre greedily stretches out in sleepless nights towards the heads and the hearts of the evil-doers its shrivelled arms, swinging the scythe. The final settlement, the day of judgment, draws constantly nearer, the great uproar already hangs ominously over the tottering thrones of Emperors and Kings. And at such a moment when punitive justice approaches with stern footsteps, accoutred with shield and sword, to discharge

<sup>1</sup> The transitory successes of the Austro-German armies in the East and South-East against the Russian armies, disorganised in the first revolutionary storms, cannot outweigh the constant repression of the Germans in the West. At the moment of writing these lines, the political and military forces in Russia are already beginning under Kerensky's energetic leadership to gather themselves together once more, while in the background, like a threatening spectre for the governors of Germany, stands the virgin force of the United States, whose appearance on the battlefields of Europe may at a stroke give a decisive change to the war.



her function as judge, at such a moment, when all just men exult, when all the unjust with howling and gnashing of teeth, see the approach of their inevitable destiny—then it is suggested that the guilty should be allowed hypocritically to protest anew their innocence with their hands raised in perjury, and to speak of the “lies and frauds” of the others, of the necessity of “a moral deed” and “moral courage,” of their “conscience and their responsibility to God” and of the “heart for their own people and for those of their enemies?” All these swollen and bombastic phrases occur in the Emperor’s communication to Bethmann of October 31st, 1916, that communication to “dear Bethmann” which formed the introduction to the peace-offer of December 12th, and at later date was published by the semi-official gentlemen in the Wilhelmstrasse for the purpose of burning incense to the “noble prince of peace” and at the same time of calumniating his malicious enemies.<sup>1</sup>

No, the opponents of Germany were more than justified, they were under an obligation to their own peoples and to the world to stop their ears to this enticing call of peace, which sought to make a virtue of a necessity, which made

<sup>1</sup> The Emperor’s communication to the Chancellor is, as a historical psychological document, sufficiently interesting to deserve verbal reproduction. It runs as follows :

Neues Palais,  
31.10.16.

My dear Bethmann,—I have since been turning our conversation thoroughly over in my mind. It is clear that the peoples of the enemy countries, kept in a morbid war atmosphere, and labouring under lies and frauds, and deluded by fighting and hatred, possess no men who are able, or who have the moral courage, to speak the word which will bring relief—to propose peace.

What is wanted is a moral deed, to free the world, including neutrals, from the pressure which weighs upon all. For such a deed it is necessary to find a ruler who has a conscience, who feels that he is responsible to God, who has a heart for his own people and for those of his enemies, who, indifferent as to any possible wilful misinterpretation of his action, possesses the will to free the world from its sufferings. I have the courage. Trusting in God, I shall dare to take this step. Please draft Notes on these lines, and submit them to me, and make all the necessary arrangements without delay.

(Signed) WILLIAM I.R.



use of the holy longing of the nations for peace as a cunning diplomatic weapon for the unholy purpose of saving from the destruction which threatened it a dynasty which was being stifled in its own crimes. Where was the ruler who feels his responsibility to God, who has a conscience and a heart for his own people and for those of his enemies—where was he in the last July days of 1914, that year of disaster, when the decision of an hour, of a minute, passed sentence of death on untold millions of men, when the ambitious impulse to action of a single man opened the floodgates by which a deluge of destitution and misery swept over the world? Where at that time was this man of the “moral deed”? Where was he? He was certainly not in Potsdam and Berlin. There sat a “war lord” in a Prussian General’s uniform, with many generals and but few civilians round the council-table, his perpetually prosperous Hussar son at his side—and he weighed the question and took advice as to whether so favourable a moment for striking the blow would ever again arise, whether the Hohenzollern eagle would ever again mount so successfully and so unhampered in the firmament, spreading its wings over Europe, surprised and unprepared. As the calculation seemed to be propitious it was resolved, now or never, to strike the blow. It was the coldest calculation, the counting of heads—compasses and lead pencil in the hand—the strategic multiplication-table that led to the decision. Neither the heart, nor the world, nor humanity played any part in deciding the matter; these were negligible quantities, who stood as unemployed stage-walkers behind the scene, to be called in later—now—when they are needed as serviceable spirits to keep the chief actors from falling through the trap-door.

“She has uncovered her heart” was the title of an old comedy which, in our grandfathers’ time, could be seen on every German stage. “He has uncovered his heart”—the Emperor William, to wit—his heart for his own people and for those of his enemies. It is only regrettable that this discovery has come too late, thirty months too late, to make it possible ever to repair all the evil, all the irretrievable consequences that his former heartlessness has brought upon the world. As young sinners often



become old beadswomen—when sinning, for which two are always required, has become sour grapes—so the booted and spurred, sabre-rattling war-lord has suddenly been transformed into a barefooted, wandering apostle of peace, waving the olive branch, into a “man of feeling” who has merely “the will to free the world from its sufferings.” Now he plays upon the flute of peace, because the trumpet of war has become somewhat rusty, and emits harsh, dissonant notes only. The others, however, the hearers, they “know the method, they know the text”; above all, they know the reason for the change of instrument; they “observe the intention and are put out of tune,” like the trumpet of war of the present bringer of peace. Full of distrust they turn their backs on the cheat who, with the death-bringing cards in his hand, seeks to bluff his opponents in the game with the world’s blessedness as trump card.

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How very far the rulers of Germany in reality are from being interested “in freeing the world from the pressure which weighs upon all,” how very much they are concerned merely to feather their own nest while this is still possible, emerges with the utmost distinctness from the offer of peace itself. They still hypocritically affect victory, even if they no longer believe in it. They still maintain the conditions of conquest outlined by the Chancellor on former occasions, even if they may themselves have begun by degrees to doubt of their practicality. Had Germany been ready to afford even the minimum satisfaction which every attacked party is justified in demanding from his aggressor, the *restitutio in integrum*, the re-establishment of the *status quo*, compensation for all damage inflicted, etc., the German Government would not have hesitated to give unambiguous expression to their readiness to do so in their peace-offer of December 12th, 1916, and in their answer to Wilson of December 26th. Instead of this, as has already been pointed out, both documents decline to make a preliminary statement of the conditions of peace; these conditions are to be brought to the conference, and this conference—a very significant



fact which should be borne in mind—is to take place only between belligerent States, neutral Powers being excluded. The conqueror will speak alone to the defeated.<sup>1</sup> “The greetings of the heart no one may hear.” No third party is to intervene in the negotiations. Why all this fuss about secrecy, this negotiation between the two sides to the exclusion of any third parties? Because, in fact, they were apprehensive of publicity, of the influence of neutral Powers in the direction of moderating the conqueror’s conditions. He who represents a just cause has no need to shun publicity. Only he who wants what is unjust seeks the darkness.

In his work on *Perpetual Peace* (Appendix II) Immanuel Kant had already put forward as the criterion of the justice or injustice of political demands, both in the internal and the external life of the State, the degree to which these demands were or were not compatible with publicity :

All actions relating to the rights of other men are wrong, if the maxims from which they follow are inconsistent with publicity.

This principle must be regarded not merely as ethical, as belonging to the doctrine of virtue, but also as juridical, referring to the rights of men. For there is something wrong in a maxim of conduct which I cannot divulge without at once defeating my purpose, a maxim which must therefore be kept secret, if it is to succeed, and which I could not publicly acknowledge without infallibly stirring up the opposition of everyone. This necessary and universal resistance, with which everyone meets me, a resistance therefore evident *a priori*, can be due to no other cause than the injustice with which such a maxim threatens everyone. . . .

In this principle of the incompatibility of the maxims of international law with their publicity, we have a good indication of the non-agreement between politics and morals.<sup>2</sup>

It will be observed that the Philosopher of Königsberg infers from the mere formal fact of the concealment of

<sup>1</sup> This diplomatic move was at the time chiefly directed against America. By the later intervention of the United States in the war, that country has now become a belligerent party, and therefore in virtue of this fact is entitled as of right to participate in the peace negotiations. This refusal of American cooperation may very well be included among the “imponderabilia” which prepared the feeling for war in the leading circles of America. It was on the German side an emanation of an evil conscience, but at the same time, like so much else, it was an act of extreme political shortsightedness.

<sup>2</sup> [Miss Campbell Smith’s translation.]



political aims the conclusion that they are also in substance unjust, because they shun the light. If this criterion is applied to the German conditions of peace and to those of their enemies, it may be said: The German desire for secrecy indicates *a priori* injustice and bad faith; the open statement on the other side indicates justice and good faith (by which, of course, only the grounds in principle of these demands are justified, not all their details).

Apart from the negatively suspicious consideration of concealment, we know, however, positively, from all the earlier and the later utterances of the German rulers and statesmen, what Germany had in fact resolved to demand at the time she wished to enter into peace negotiations, and what she is still determined to ask to-day. True, she no longer asks the whole purse, but she still asks a very considerable portion of the ready money of the party attacked. She still points to the war-map for the time being as the basis of her peace demands. A gulf still yawns between Germany's peace illusions and that minimum of concessions which could in any way make it possible to begin peace negotiations—a gulf which can only be overbridged when the basis of the German peace conditions, the war-map, has in fact undergone a modification. Had the German Government, relying on the humane sentiments which the Emperor intimated in his letter to the Chancellor, given their opponents, instead of a vague statement of their readiness for peace, a positive peace offer embodying the minimum conditions, already outlined elsewhere, which every person attacked has a right to demand from every aggressor, such a proposition, in view of the immeasurable crime involved in this war, would certainly not have been an acceptable peace, but it would at least have been a possible starting-point for peace-negotiations, promising success. So far as Germany is still removed from this starting-point, so far are we still removed from the possibility of peace-negotiations. So long as Germany is still removed from this, so long will Germany alone bear the guilt of further bloodshed.



### THE STATE OF DEFENCE—THE FOUNDATION IN LAW OF THE PARTY ATTACKED.

I may summarise my previous observations to the following effect :

1. The party attacked, who, as a condition of the conclusion of peace, demands the re-establishment of the former position, compensation for the damage suffered and, over and above this, guarantees against similar outrages in future, stands on the ground of law. The only question to be investigated is whether the demands for compensation and guarantees put forward by the party attacked are in detail, in their nature and extent, within the limits of what is necessary or expedient.

2. The party attacked does not abandon his foundation in law—so far as future guarantees are concerned—even if the arrangements to be made to afford guarantees represent an improvement of his former position.

3. The aggressor who, as a condition precedent to the conclusion of peace, demands any improvement of his former position—whether in the form of territorial gains, of compensation or securities—has no legal ground on which to stand ; and all his claims, no matter of what nature or extent, must forthwith be repudiated *a limine*.

4. No demands of the aggressor in this direction can be discussed, because, no matter how modest they may be, they are contrary to law. All the demands of the party attacked must be discussed, because, no matter how extreme, they stand on the ground of law.

The ground in law, on which the assaulted party stands, is the state of defence. For its definition in the sense of international law the determination of its meaning in criminal law is entirely adequate : “ The state of defence (*Notwehr*) is that defence (*Verteidigung*) which is necessary to ward off from oneself or from another an actual attack in violation of the law ” (Criminal Code, § 53).



If the attack is contrary to law, the defence, on the other hand, is a legal action. The demands of the party attacked—however they may be judged or restricted otherwise—remain legal demands ; for they result from legitimate defence against an attack in violation of the law. Even the transgression of the limits of the State of defence is excused on the principles of criminal law, when the transgressor has acted “ in consternation, alarm or terror ” (Criminal Code, § 53, paragraph 3). The classical example of such a case occurs when the man who is robbed shoots down the escaping burglar, whom he finds at night in his room. Here there is a transgression of the state of defence, for it was not necessary for his protection that he should kill the man who was in flight. Yet, nevertheless, immunity is here given, because the man who killed the burglar acted in consternation, alarm and terror.

The same exonerating circumstances are also applicable to the Powers who have been attacked, if in their demands for defence, which are justifiable in themselves, they should exceed the proper measure. In their demands they may act inexpediently, wrongly, or short-sightedly—all these points of view we will discuss later—yet, nevertheless, their action remains founded on law, and is never to be placed on the same level as the criminal action of their aggressor. If a party injured by an action which is liable to punishment demands as plaintiff in a criminal process compensation which, in the view of the magistrate, exceeds what is permissible, and above all exceeds the limits of the injury really suffered, the magistrate will reduce this claim for compensation to what he regards as justifiable, and will refuse the plaintiff what he has demanded in excess. Does the plaintiff thereby become a criminal ? Is he thereby placed on the same level as the miscreant who sits in the dock ? To demand and to sanction are two different matters. Every crime calls for punishment and expiation. With regard to the enormity of the crime and the degree of the expiation, discussion, doubts and errors are possible. *Errare est humanum*. The worst charge that can be brought against the injured party is that he has gone too far in his demands. This charge can be borne and can be remedied. The charge against the criminal—his criminal



action—remains for all time, and will not be washed away, no matter how great the punishment and the expiation may be. If his crime is in itself already so enormously great, and if he crowns it by demanding acquisitions and “compensation” for himself as a reward for his deed, his offence only becomes all the more rank, and the demands of the other side, produced as a reaction of his behaviour—even if they should be exaggerated—thereby become only more easy of comprehension and excuse. Intentions of conquest in an aggressor constitute an aggravation of his crime. Intentions of conquest in the party attacked can at the most be a transgression of the state of defence, which no doubt may be reprehensible, but are always palliated on the ground of the justifiable apprehension of new attacks. The demands of the aggressor are, viewed on principle, opposed to law; the demands of the party attacked are, viewed on principle, in accordance with law, although in details these demands are to be restricted within the limits imposed by reason, justice and expediency.

The above principles must be kept in view as the basis of all the following discussions. Even if the peace demands of the Entente Powers should be considered by some as likely to defeat their own ends or as too extreme, those who hold this view should never lose sight of the fact that the point of departure and the basis of these demands is the wrong that has in fact been suffered, that apart from this wrong their demands for compensation and security would never have been advanced.

#### THE PEACE DEMANDS OF THE PARTY ATTACKED.

What, then, are the principles on which judgment is to be passed on the nature and the extent of the peace demands of a party attacked—the principles which it is necessary to observe in determining how far these demands are to be recognised as justified, or rejected as unjustified?

According to general principles of law, which must be regarded as applicable to international law also, inasmuch as these principles rest on logical and ethical considerations, and International Law is in essence merely the theoretical



and practical application of such principles to the intercourse between nations—according to these general principles, the perpetrator of an act contrary to law is in the first place under an obligation to restore what has been improperly acquired, and secondly to give full compensation for damages inflicted. In addition to this, however, if there is a danger of new injuries arising as a result of the same or similar actions, the party injured can also require real guarantees against such dangers in the future.

(a) In so far as the *restitutio in integrum*, the return of what has been unlawfully acquired, is concerned, no doubt can exist as to the justifiable limits of the demands of the party attacked. The aggressor has in fact to give up the whole of what has been acquired in violation of the law, without any exception, down to the last square yard and the last farthing.

(b) On the question of compensation there can again be no doubt as to the limits in principle to be imposed on the demands of the party attacked. The aggressor has to make good, without exception, all the damage which the party attacked can be proved to have suffered—all the damage in wealth and in property, in land and buildings, in the loss of life and the mutilation of men—in short, he has to give to the party attacked, whether it be in money or in kind, whatever is necessary to make it possible for the latter to restore his previous position unchanged, as it existed before the illegal attack.

(c) A divergency of view is possible only in the third category of the claims which may justifiably be made by the party attacked, that is to say, in the question of obtaining securities for the future.

#### FUTURE SECURITY.

The future security of the party attacked may be realised in the most various ways. There are countless possibilities of arriving at the righteous end of making the disturber of the peace harmless for the future. This purpose of rendering the aggressor innocuous has been the underlying idea of all conclusions of peace as long as human history has existed—unless, as has unfortunately too



frequently been the case, the wrong has triumphed, and the aggressor has in the end dictated the conditions of peace to the party attacked.

In our present discussion of principles, we are not called upon to consider this case of might prevailing over right, which, happily, is becoming more and more improbable in the case of the present war. Our intention is to establish principles of law, the self-evident presupposition of which is that law or right must in fact be in a position to enforce itself. We must therefore proceed from the presupposition that it is not the aggressor, but the party attacked, who remains victorious, or at least that the struggle ends without a definite decision, as a draw. It is only in the two latter cases that we can consider the determination of certain limits in the question of demands, whereas in the first case cited, that of the victory of the aggressor, neither law nor ethics, but merely brutal force, is the determining factor.

If, then, the party attacked emerges from the struggle as the victor, or if at any rate the struggle ends in such a way that the aggressor cannot be regarded as victorious, the following, in my opinion, are the guiding lines of principle which are to be put forward for the purpose of determining in its nature and extent the justifiable future security of the party attacked :

## I.

The nature and the method of obtaining security for the future depend on the circumstances of the persons, the time, and the causes involved, which are different in each case, and consequently lead to different solutions. In ancient times the conqueror believed that he could obtain adequate security for the future only by leading into slavery the defeated ruler, in many cases with his subjects as well, or even by putting them to death. Expropriation, slavery and death were the weapons of security which in the ancient world, and frequently in Christian mediæval times, were considered as being alone calculated to maintain the peace of the future. These barbaric measures for guaranteeing security were then at a later date replaced by



more humane methods: the property of the State was expropriated, but private property was left untouched; the defeated princes were neither killed nor made slaves, but were deposed and sent into banishment. I have already referred to the fact that in the case of the first Napoleon life-long banishment on a lonely island was still regarded as the only effective method of securing the peace of the future. After the war of 1870-71, Germany believed that she was making peace secure by the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and the creation of the new Vosges frontier—although in this she was wrong, for it was precisely by this act of violence that the seeds of new wars were planted.

In any case, we observe from history that although the object of making peace secure was the same on all occasions of concluding peace, nevertheless the means chosen for the attainment of this end vary according to the time and the circumstances. Here again the analogy of criminal law is entirely applicable: in the case of a more tender, less ingrained criminal, it is possible to be satisfied with milder methods of punishment and security, whereas in the case of a more serious, professional and habitual criminal, with a past record of convictions, it is necessary in the interests of human society that he should be made harmless once and for all. The adherents of capital punishment plead for execution; the opponents of capital punishment for perpetual loss of freedom.

So also in the case of the gravest criminals whom an unmerciful fate has turned loose on suffering humanity, in the case of the crowned criminals who have been guilty of high treason against humanity, who are traitors to their own country, the severest punishments and the most radical methods of obtaining security are in place—such punishments and methods as would preclude them once and for all from the possibility of abusing their power to the injury of their own and of other peoples. Since the single murderer is punished with death, I should find it but just if the wholesale murderer were also made subject to this heaviest punishment—heaviest, I say, because, unfortunately, since the abolition of mediæval torture, no heavier punishment now exists. And just as, apart from the capital punishment, the single murderer is also deprived



of his "civil rights of honour" (so that in the event of his being pardoned, he is debarred from holding public offices and dignities), so also I should consider it to be but just if in future a world Court should impose on the wholesale crowned murderer, apart from capital punishment, the loss of "princely rights of honour" as well. This would mean that they would remain permanently incapable (should they remain alive) of ever again exercising their princely calling. This most radical and most effective method of creating security for mankind from these harmful persons is at the same time, in my opinion, the only one that corresponds to the sense of justice implanted by Nature in each of us. Others, milder in sentiment, may be satisfied with milder punishments and milder measures for obtaining security, with deposition, with banishment, with the mere loss of princely rights of honour. In any case the nature of the punishment and of the guarantees to be obtained must be applied to the gravity of the deed and to the greatness of the future dangers. General rules cannot here be established; everything depends on the persons and the circumstances of the particular case.

## II

It is, however, the case that principles can be defined with regard to the necessary limits imposed in obtaining security. If the purpose of obtaining security is really to be attained, these limits must be drawn in such a way that while the guilty are hit, the innocent shall as far as possible be spared. The guilty are, in general, the Rulers, the Governments and their adherents; the innocent are, in general, the peoples. So long as the weapons of punishment and security strike the real perpetrators, they are justified and in conformity with the object for which they are designed. They are, however, unjustified and opposed to this object when they strike, not the guilty corrupters, but the innocent corrupted—not the Rulers, the Governments and the governing classes, but the great mass of the people, who in non-democratic countries are nearly always guiltless of the crimes and excesses of their leaders,



who are always powerless against their decisions. The efforts made by the adversary to inflict punishment and obtain security must be sent to the right address, to the guilty and to those who are responsible, not to the innocent and to those who have no responsibility. The victor in a war of defence cannot make a greater mistake than when he puts forward conqueror's demands which, while they may inflict mortification and a diminution of power on the Rulers and Governments on the other side, yet at the same time so weaken and outrage the enemy peoples that, in the feeling of their innocence, they are led to revolt against the violation, and now make common cause with their Rulers. The Rulers must be isolated from their peoples, not welded together with them.

No matter how certain and unimpugnable may be the ground in law of the party attacked, nevertheless this party changes its ground from law to unlawfulness, and indeed acts contrary to its own objects, if by exorbitant demands directed to the wrong address, it inflames the embitterment of the defeated aggressor-nation, thus transforming it into a nation acting in defence, and welding it into an iron ring with its Rulers and Governments. Particularly for the party attacked when it has become victorious, it is a law of prudence to determine and to apportion guilt and expiation in accordance with justice and reason, to bring the guilty to punishment and to expiation, and to require from them guarantees of security, but to spare the innocent, so far as may in any way be possible. Guilt and expiation must be made specific; they dare not be expressed in general terms.

It is by resort to such tactics of prudence and justice that the party which has been attacked best serves its own interests. In separating the guilty individuals from their peoples and in placing these in the pillory, they arouse in those who have been misled a true recognition of the individual guilt of their leaders and misleaders, and thereby inspire them to revolutionary opposition to the continuation of the crime that has been committed, and to the repetition of similar crimes. In this way the former enemy is transformed into the most valuable ally. This policy of "*divide et impera*" must be pursued so long as it is in



any way practicable. Not until it has been definitively established that the people on the other side absolutely and unconditionally repudiate the line of division between themselves and their despots, that they are resolved, for better or worse, for life or death, to identify themselves with their Rulers and Governments—not until then has the time come when the victorious opposing party may see itself forced to drop the distinction between rulers and ruled, and to hold the enemy people jointly responsible with their rulers. If it is in any way possible and so long as it is possible, let there be a line of division between the guilty and the innocent; let the two classes be treated alike only when the innocent do not wish it to be otherwise, and when they thereby make themselves partners in the guilt. This is the deep and true meaning of the cry which is being more and more loudly heard in England and America: “No terms with the Hohenzollern.” This is the policy of prudence and justice which should guide the victorious defender in the steps which he takes towards peace. The more he disregards these rules, the more he furnishes the despots on the other side with support among their own people as a result of peace demands falsely formulated and addressed to the wrong quarter, the more difficult will it be for him to give effect to his peace conditions, the more insecure will be the peace that is concluded.

#### INTERVENTION OR NON-INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF THE ENEMY?

The question may be put forward for discussion, and it is in fact so put forward by all the political parties in Germany, whether it can be the right and the mission of belligerent opponents to intervene in the internal political conditions of the country opposed to them, by drawing a line of distinction and separation between the people and its rulers, and whether they can thus demand a reform of its constitution or even the overthrow of its Government or its ruling house. It has indeed been recognised as a fundamental rule in recent International Law that every people is itself called upon to determine its constitution and administration, its dynasty and its system of government, and to



modify these itself if it considers such a course requisite. The principle of non-intervention in the inner affairs of another State has become a recognised rule, not only in European International Law, but also in International Law as applied beyond Europe. In Europe it is called the nations' right of self-determination. In America, so far as the non-intervention of European States in American affairs is concerned, it is called the Monroe Doctrine. The Entente Powers have in particular proclaimed this principle as one of their most important war-aims, and more especially President Wilson has represented the extension of the leading idea of the Monroe Doctrine to all nations as the aim of his originally pacifist intervention, which has now become military in its character.

In view of these facts, it might appear illogical if at the present moment the Entente Powers, acting in concert with their ally America, represent as the first and most important pre-supposition of a lasting peace the transformation of the constitutional life of Germany into a democracy or even, as is suggested from Russia which has now become Republican, into a Republic, and if these Powers further for their part feel themselves called upon to bring about this transformation, for which the German people apparently cannot themselves muster sufficient energy. This effort on the part of the enemies of Germany—advanced as a war-aim—appears to contradict the modern principle of non-intervention, and it is therefore rejected by all the parties in Germany, from the Right to the Left, as an intolerable infringement of the German people's right of self-determination.

Is this standpoint justified or unjustified? That is the question.

As the fifth preliminary article to perpetual peace, Kant advances the proposition: "No State shall violently interfere with the constitution and administration of another." The philosopher of Königsberg proceeds from the axiom of the "autonomy of all States" in their internal affairs: even the bad government of one State does not in itself afford another any right of intervention, since the bad example which one free person gives



another (as *scandalum acceptum*) does no injury to the latter.

An intervention of outside Powers in the internal affairs of "an independent nation which is only struggling with internal disease" is, according to Kant, a violation of the autonomy of this people. In this definition of the philosopher's conception there is at the same time to be found the limitation which he desires to give to his thought. "A nation which is only struggling with internal disease"—that is the crucial point. The case, in which this inner malady might act contagiously in an outward direction and might indeed even infect the whole world and lead to its destruction, is not, it is true, expressly considered by Kant, but he lets it be plainly seen from the above reasons for non-intervention that in such a case he would allow an exception from his rule.

Had he written his book (which appeared in 1795) some years later, when the French Revolution had led to the Napoleonic dictatorship and to the idea of world dominion, and when it had thus become a danger for the whole world, it may be presumed that he would have expressly added to the proposition, which he advanced as a rule, the exception that intervention of foreign Powers in the internal conditions of a country is justified when this intervention is requisite for the protection of the intervening State's own right, its own security and its own future.

In fact, Kant's maxim of non-intervention appears justified only when the question is exclusively one of internal events, of a greater or less degree of freedom, of a greater or less degree of rights to be conceded to the people, of a greater or less degree of autocracy. I have elsewhere pointed out that no people has the right to press on another benefits for which this other has no desire. *Beneficia non obtruduntur*. If the German people feels at its ease under the domination of the Prussian-Hohenzollern military autocracy, under the German sham Parliament, under the Prussian electoral law of three classes which does not even offer the appearance of a Parliament, under the dozens of more or less Prussianised and Hohenzollernised princely families, and if it further desires to perpetuate this condition until the Greek Calends, despite



the breath of revolution which is to-day being wafted from the East across Europe, that is primarily merely a matter for the German people, and no one outside the German frontiers has any right to intervene. It is true that far-seeing Germans, of whom then as now there were only a handful, had soon after 1870 already recognised that the Hohenzollern Empire could not but prove fatal to Germany. Soon after the establishment of the Prussian Empire the unknown author of *The New Winter's Tale*—one of those prophets who have no honour in their own country—had already uttered the gloomiest forebodings for the German people :

It is long since I knew the Prussian eagle, and often have I censured it. It has always been nothing but an impudent sparrow, and never a real eagle ;

A sparrow as impudent as any in writing and stealing. If it has not been the misfortune of the German people, what then can be described as misfortune ? . . .

The Hohenzollern race, with its clumsy hoof has been called to the Imperial throne by the foolish German people.

Beware how the Hohenzollern hoof will crush the German flowers. When the call of battle is heard, how will the fields stream with smoke and blood !

How will the hired soldiers of the Mark torment the youth of Germany ! How will the Prussian whip-handle dance on the German backs !

Aha, how they rage with shot and blow, each one an Orlando in his madness, a single murderer, gigantic in stature, the whole people at the word of command.

The nation in arms, a raging beast that is not placed in its prison. It seizes and tears with the blindness of rage whomsoever it is incited against !

It looks not to the right, it looks not to the left ; it only looks to the hangmen. The hint that is given is enough for the work of murder ;—that is the nation of thinkers !

O German Michel ! if you were so stupid and let yourself be beaten to a cripple, then beg till your feet are lame and bent ; you have nothing to complain about.

You were so stupid and stood up and sacrificed your blood and your life, and then allowed yourself to receive a gracious kick behind,—

And you are still proud of the disgrace of the kick and wander through the country with songs of the heroic Kaiser, of the heroic Fritz, of the lust of battle and the noise of victory.

Red is the disgrace which the Hohenzollern hand has forced on Germany's neck, the garment of shame which the Hohenzollerns have bound firmly about the German land.

The Hohenzollern black, the Hohenzollern white and red of the



German countries' shame—that is a banner like none other I know from the Nile to the North Pole.

That is the Hohenzollern black-white-red, the banner of the colours of death, which the Germans in war and death have gained as a banner for the Empire.

Disillusioned and indignant, the poet escapes from German countries. Rather will he fly to the uttermost ends of the earth, rather will he journey into the wilderness or descend into Hell than continue to live in German unfreedom :

Yes, yes, I will again go back to the stinking gulf of Hell ; and even if it is empty and desolate and cold, it is still possible to live freely there.

There will I lie, and wait and rest until other times come—until the Germans with energetic action have taken their own fate in their hands.

Until the Germans are in truth a people of men who think for themselves, who with firm step and free thought lead and direct themselves.

O German people, if one day you thus gather yourself together for action, then again fresh and happy I will wander up to visit you !

Then I will again raise my eyes at Frankfurt and ask proudly and emphatically : ‘Where does the President of the German Republic dwell ?’

O German people, it will still be a long time till I visit you in that way, so then stagger along the accustomed way and be angry with this book !

Since the time when the poet of *The New Winter's Tale* directed these bitterly satirical darts against the Prussian Empire which had then newly arisen, nothing has changed for the better in the German Empire. On the contrary, the political conditions have worsened ; above all, the feelings of the nation of “thinkers” towards the dynasty of “hangmen” in the period of the second William (and more especially since the outbreak of this Hohenzollern war of conquest), have sunk many degrees lower, have become many degrees more servile and submissive than they were during the period of liberal ascendancy immediately after the establishment of the Empire.

In order to form some idea of the moral decadence of our present day “poets and thinkers,” the reader should compare this biting effusion of an old German Democrat and Republican with the present attitude of our leading German poets who, arrayed in Prussian uniforms and laden



with orders and decorations, strut on the title-pages of their war books—who humbly and fawningly lay their bombastically patriotic war-poetry at the feet of the deluded German people and their high-born deluders. Shortly after the outbreak of war I had the opportunity of witnessing in a west-end theatre in Berlin a really inspiring patriotic and poetic scene. To an operetta of some sort which happened to be in the repertoire there had been added a patriotic interlude by Hermann Sudermann. Supported by a hundred men, an old German duke appeared in arms on the stage in order to blare into the enthusiastic auditorium, to a deafening orchestral accompaniment, a battle-song expressly composed by the poet for this purpose. At the close of each verse the men raised their swords and shields, produced an infernal uproar, and at the same time shrieked the following refrain into the theatre with all the energy of which they were capable :

The German man, the free-born man,  
He loves the Kaiser as he can,  
He loves and holds him dear.  
And strikes the foe full hardly, man ;  
He is the best and bravest man,  
He made our swords gleam clear.<sup>1</sup>

At the words “hardly man” the “hardy men” at the word of command struck into the air with the utmost energy, clearly in patriotic recollection of the heroic son of the celebrated heroic father and of his immortal saying : “Keep at it.”

Gerhart Hauptmann and Richard Dehmel and all the other inhabitants of the German Parnassus almost without exception are in no way behind their colleague Sudermann (I am not here speaking of the *minores gentes*, of the officially appointed sycophants of the type of Ganghofer). Indeed the first two I have mentioned excel Sudermann in patriotism. Very soon after the beginning of the war

<sup>1</sup> [Der deutsche Mann, der freie Mann,  
Der liebt den Kaiser, wie er kann,  
Er hält ihn lieb und wert.  
Und haut die Feinde feste man,  
Er ist und bleibt der beste Mann  
Denn er schliff unser Schwert.]



did they not both experience the great satisfaction of being able to adorn their button-holes with the red order of the eagle of the fourth class, the pride and the adornment of Prussian councillors—a decoration which any better-class Court Marshal would reject with contumely? Dehmel makes a parade of his officer's uniform through all the illustrated papers. Hauptmann, the former revolutionary, who could produce his politically dangerous dramas on the Prussian stage only after a bitter struggle with the censorship, to-day proudly allows himself to be portrayed in the *Weltspiegel* in the midst of his three sons in uniform. To-day the poet of *Biberpelz* and *Fuhrmann Henschel* writes puffing articles recommending the sixth war loan, in which, like a faithful shepherd, he exclaims to the sheep who are to be shorn:

We offered our hands for the conclusion of peace; our enemies rejected it. It is meant that we should become their serfs, the bondsmen of Europe. No, indeed, we are to be utterly destroyed. None of these things will happen—never! Unbending is the proud spirit which guarantees this. . . . (There follows the invitation to “lend their wealth to the Fatherland,” etc.)

These renegades of German democracy speak of a proud spirit—these erstwhile revolutionaries who with their civil clothes have taken off their civil spirit, who have laid aside their civil courage before the thrones of kings. It is not meant that they should become the serfs of Europe. But they do not see that they have become the serfs of the Hohenzollerns and their Junkers. Never before in the history of the world has a thinking, sturdy and strong people been so degraded by subtle deceit to thoughtlessness, blindness and weakness of character. This is the situation in the high places of German intelligence, where once freedom of thought and candour prevailed. What must it be like in the depths, where even in the past every poisonous seed, every slimy growth, lived and prospered?

\* \* \* \* \*

The condition of mind and of character of the German people, as it has been fashioned in the fifty years of Prussian dominance and as it has now unfolded itself in the most



evil and most poisonous growth in the course of this war, agrees with the condition of political barrenness under which the German people still lives in the present harvest time of democracy. During the last fifty years no progress in the sense of democratic development can be recorded in Prussian Germany, but rather has there been retrogression. The Prussian franchise has remained the same caricature as ever. The Easter message of 1917, it is true, looks forward to an improvement in the Prussian electoral law, an improvement which was already promised nine years (1908) ago in a solemn Speech from the Throne as "the most important task of the present," but, in accordance with the hallowed traditions of the Hohenzollern House as to breaking faith, it has not so far been carried out. The new promise, which is couched in extremely vague phrases, is also to be carried out only after the war. It is a pledge which is precisely similar to the familiar promise of a dowry after the celebration of the marriage which the prudent son-in-law declines with justified suspicion.<sup>1</sup>

The franchise for the Reichstag—which was originally truly equal and democratic—has meanwhile become the same caricature as the Prussian franchise has always been; it is now a caricature because of the maintenance of the old electoral divisions which give to an illiterate Pomeranian peasant ten times the voting power of a highly educated citizen of a West Prussian town. The King not only *reigns* in Prussia and Germany, but he also *governs*, contrary to the first principle of modern political law: *Le roi règne, mais ne gouverne pas*. The point to which we are led by the unrestricted governing power of the Prussian King, who is unfortunately also the German Emperor, is seen not only in the lack of direction in the internal policy, but above all in the fatal foreign policy of the German Empire. The right of declaring war

<sup>1</sup> The July decree of the Prussian King which promises equal franchise—Bethmann's swan song—also omits to fix a definite time for carrying out this promise. The "next elections" are to take place according to the new electoral law—assuming that the Prussian Junker Parliament will approve the electoral Bill. But when the next election will take place—whether during or after the war—is a point which is purposely left vague in the royal decree.



which belongs personally to the Emperor I have already described in my book as being the bane of Germany and of the world, and have indicated that the abolition of this right is the minimum demand of German democracy.<sup>1</sup>

It is precisely here, on the question of the Emperor's decision for war in the summer of 1914, that we arrive at the decisive point where the question of the internal constitution of Germany simultaneously becomes a question of the peace and of the security of Europe and of the world. Here the question is no longer one of inadmissible intervention in the relationship of the German people towards its ruling house and its Government. Here the question is that of securing the original rights of nations who have suffered as a result of the Hohenzollern autocracy, who have been enveloped in sanguinary wars, and plunged in distress and misery and will certainly so be plunged once more if an end is not made of this autocracy. Here Europe and the world have the right to exclaim to the German people which still refuses to awake from its leaden slumber: *Non tua, sed mea res agitur*. The question is not of your rights, but of mine. Either you, the German people, must find the strength to free yourself from a system of government, from a ruling dynasty which, by virtue of its nature and its traditions, will always continue to bring into the world conflicts of war—indeed even in times of peace it will bring the menace and the danger of war—or else we, the enemies of Germany, who are at the same time the parties chiefly injured, must take our salvation into our own hands and free you, the German people, as well as ourselves from those who have occasioned the mischief. This would not represent the assumption of the rights of others, but the exercise of one's own rights.

Let us assume that the head of a family is afflicted with severe persecutorial delusions, and that, in obedience to his distracted ideas, he commits a series of irresponsible actions intended to ward off imaginary assaults. Is the family alone justified in restraining the man who is thus subject to illusions, or are other outside persons against whom the mania of the sufferer may be directed, also

<sup>1</sup> See *J'accuse*, page 410.



justified in defending themselves against him and in rendering him harmless? Without doubt the latter; anyone who is injured is justified in taking the appropriate steps against the man who is a common danger, and indeed the executive power takes prior action in the public interest.

This right of protection and prevention in the case of third parties exists in increased measure when, as so frequently occurs in the case of mental maladies, those in the environment of the man who is afflicted fail to observe his malady or are even infected by him. Particularly in the case of megalomania and delusional persecution (paranoia) contagion is far from being a rare phenomenon, and whole families frequently succumb to the delusions of the member who is first afflicted. In such cases, may not third parties who are injured by those who are suffering, may not the executive power intervene to protect public security? Who else should do so?

If the question is not one of insanity but of crimes, the crimes of an individual which his environment fails to see or recognise, or even of the collective crimes of a whole national family, it is impossible, so long as a court of international jurisdiction does not exist, to refuse to other injured nations the right to take the appropriate measures to protect themselves and other peoples from the pernicious consequences and at the same time from the repetition of the crimes of the individual or of the "mass."

The man who is mentally disordered or a criminal, when seated on a throne, is a danger not only to his own people but also to all other peoples. Primarily, of course, each people is itself called to exercise the office of judge against its own corrupters. Banishment, imprisonment and execution are the weapons of punishment and protection which enslaved and deceived peoples have applied in lavish measure against unfaithful princes. But if the will or the strength of the people should be found incapable of seizing such legitimate means of self-help, or if the people itself suffers from the delusion or is entangled in the crime, then there must be conceded to other peoples and to other princes, who are called upon to suffer under the insanity or the crime of the individual offender in the same way as his own people, the right to reduce to harmlessness



the incorrigible harmful persons who sit on the thrones of princes.

This right has never been disputed in the past, whether in ancient or in modern history. It is merely the manner of giving it effect that has varied according to times and circumstances. When Charles the Great had defeated Desiderius, the King of the Longobards, and had subjected the whole of the North of Italy under his sceptre, he entered the foreign capital, took the enemy king prisoner and sent him into a cloister as a monk. He adopted the same procedure with the recalcitrant Duke of Bavaria. To impose by force on dangerous enemies the contemplative life of a monk was at that time a favourite method of making them harmless once and for all. The wars of the coalition against Republican France, especially the preceding invasion of Prussian and Austrian armies into French Lorraine in the summer of 1792 under Ferdinand of Brunswick, were not, it is true, directed against criminal monarchs, but in the opinion of the allies they were directed against a criminal system of government which imperilled the peace of Europe. They were monarchical attempts to exorcise the danger with which the French Republic threatened the existence of European dynasties and to set the Bourbons by the grace of God once more in place of the French people who were governing themselves. That these attempts to secure salvation produced precisely the opposite effect, that they cost the heads of the King and Queen of France as well as an untold number of their Royalist adherents, is not to be ascribed as a merit of the monarchs who took the field against the Republic.

The most recent and most striking example of expressly proclaimed intervention in the internal political conditions of another great State is the watchword issued in Germany from above and from below in the summer of 1914: "Against Tsarism ! Against Russian despotism !" In so far as it resounded from above, this watchword was a lie and a hypocrisy. Ever since the days of the Holy Alliance, and even before that time, the Hohenzollerns were the most intimate friends and comrades in thought of the Romanofs ; wherever they could do so, they rendered them loving services against the Russian people in their



effort for freedom. Both before and after the outbreak of the war there was nothing for which they would have longed more ardently than a renewal of that alliance of the three Emperors against democratic Western Europe and against the democracy which was rising in their own land. But notwithstanding his friendship with his German cousin, the Russian autocrat had recognised only too well the latter's egotistical efforts for hegemony ; he had refused to allow himself to be made a footstool to facilitate the ascent of the Hohenzollern dynasty. He feared, and, as we now see, with reason, lest military adventures in which he might be entangled by the Hohenzollern Emperor should make his throne totter, or might even lead to its loss. He remained true to the alliance of peace with France, because he wanted peace and because he feared war. Since William II. could not pursue his plans of world power *with* the Tsar, he decided to achieve them *against* the Tsar ; he resolved to let loose the war " against Tsarism," in other words, to appear as the liberator of the Russian people, who neither wished nor expected liberation from him. In giving currency to this phrase, however, the German Emperor acknowledged the principle of intervention which is to-day being turned against him.

Certainly, the Tsarism of the Romanoffs was for the Russian people an infamous despotism, the sufferance of this despotism was a perpetual shame. For Europe, however, it was a far less danger than the parliamentarily embroidered government of the Hohenzollerns, which is in reality equally autocratic. No matter how cruelly, inhumanly and unlawfully Tsarism may have raged against the Russian people, it did *not* entertain the thought of provoking a European war for the purpose of the extension of its own power. On the contrary ! It should not be forgotten in his honour that it was the Emperor Nicholas II who called into being the Hague work of peace, and thereby laid the first foundation of the future building of European peace. " Kaiserism," on the other hand, has maintained intact within Germany the features of the state of law (the features ! In reality beneath the threadbare garments appears everywhere the nakedness of the feudal and police State) ; but in foreign relations by its militaristically



conducted policy of violence and world-power, by its stubborn opposition to any peaceful organisation of the peoples, it has engendered in Europe a perpetual unrest and danger of war, and it has finally in fact set in motion the long prepared war. The responsibility for this fatal development is not borne by the great mass of the German people, which is jointly responsible only in this sense, that it trusted its leaders in a spirit of blind confidence, that it did not recognise, or conceive the possibility of, the criminal plans which these men entertained. The guilt of the deed is borne by the Hohenzollerns, their servants in the Government, their adherents and instigators in the governing classes of Prussia and Germany.

It is necessary to separate the guilty from the innocent, and to make harmless once for all those who are truly and alone guilty, if it is hoped to base the peace of the world on an enduring foundation. This is justifiable intervention, inasmuch as the matter at issue is concerned, not with the interests of the German people alone, but with the interests of all peoples. When the Emperor William gave currency to the phrase "Against Tsarism" on the occasion of the provocation of war, this represented an intrusion in the internal affairs of Russia, which, apart from the hypoeritical mask, was in its essence unjustified. Tsarism was a misfortune for Russia, but it was no danger for Europe. If, on the other hand, the present enemies of Germany—the most recent and powerful enemy, America, at their head—proclaim the watchword "Against Prussian autoeracy," such an action is more than justified, since this autoeracy is not only a misfortune and a shame for the German people, but an enduring danger for the peace of Europe and of the world.

If the German people were gradually to recognise the internal shame and the external danger and were to act accordingly, so much the better for this people and so much the better for other peoples. Should the Germans, however, continue to adhere to the point of view which they have so far maintained, that the arrangement of their internal affairs is their business alone, that the internal conditions of Germany are innocent of the external catastrophe which has broken over Europe, should the German



people still continue to cover with its shield the guilty authors of this war, instead of drawing an indelible line of separation between it and them, then indeed no other course remains open to the enemies of Germany than to extend the execution which is due to the guilty to the innocent as well ; then no other course remains open than to cause the people to atone jointly for the actions of their Rulers and Governments.

It is for the German people to recognise and to act. As the ally of those whose purpose is to give right and freedom to the nations and enduring peace to humanity, it will become a member with equal rights, a powerful and happy participator in the future community of the nations. As the abettor and the associate of its criminal dynasty, it will have to share with them their punishment and expiation, it will plunge with them into the depths.

### III.

There is a third requirement which must be applied to the peace conditions of the people which has been attacked but has remained successful in defence. They must not only be just in their nature and scope, but they must also be attainable, having regard to the actual situation. To put forward unattainable peace conditions, no matter how just they may be, merely means unnecessary bloodshed. In this case the *summum jus* becomes the *summa injuria*. The greatest right becomes the greatest wrong, not only towards their own but also towards other peoples, and indeed towards humanity. A continuation of the struggle, with its inevitable consequences in the further destruction of wealth and human life, can only be justified if the just aims of the party insisting on a continuation are also attainable aims, in other words if an improvement in the relative strength of the party attacked in a military, political or economic respect, can be expected to result from a continuation of the struggle. Notwithstanding all the justice of the cause represented by the party attacked, the further sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of men, the continued dissipation of hundreds of milliards of marks would be an unpardonable action, if it could be foreseen



with certainty or probability that after all this further sacrifice the relative strength of the two belligerents would remain approximately the same as before. If the party of right, as I may call the party attacked, insists on the establishment of its right as against force, it is therefore called upon to consider and examine carefully whether this aim, having regard to the relative strength which exists at the time or can be expected in future, is possible of achievement in full or at any rate in restricted measure. If this question must be answered in the negative, no other course is open to the Right, confronted with the brutal reality of the facts, than to be satisfied for the time being with the attainable ends and, as must unfortunately so often happen in history, postpone till better times their full realisation. No one can batter down walls with his head. The skull is, in fact, weaker than the wall. It is, however, possible with the help of what lies beneath the skull, with the brain, to devise ways and means to undermine gradually a wall which will resist even the strongest brain-pan, to weaken it and finally to cause its collapse. This must be the task of the thinking brains on the side of the party of right, should it be compelled—from which may a kind fate spare us!—to acknowledge temporarily and partially its inferiority to the party of violence.

#### IV.

Let us assume that the aims which we have recognised as just are in themselves attainable, it still remains to be considered whether the sacrifices which are requisite for their attainment are in a just proportion to each individual aim and to all the combined aims which the party of right is endeavouring to secure. It may very well be the case that certain points in the programme of the party of Right in the matter of aims may demand special sacrifices which far outweigh the aim itself. The attainment of such aims may therefore be possible, but they may have to be so dearly bought that at the conclusion no balance remains in favour of the party which has advanced them. In other words, the costs of the suit may be greater than the value of the subject in dispute ; they may, even in the victorious



party, entirely devour the object at issue. Such cases occur not infrequently in private life, more especially in the life of the peasantry, where we often come across a "Law-suit Jack," who from perversity or crabbedness, from embitterment against a neighbour or a local authority stakes his fortunes on a lawsuit, which even if successful cannot come near to making good the loss that is suffered. The saying that holds good in private life : "Better a lean settlement than a fat lawsuit," has a much greater significance in the life of nations. Here the question at issue is not merely that of the riches and the existence of an individual, but of the life and wealth of whole nations. For this reason those who are responsible for the destinies of these nations cannot be released from the obligation of examining each one of their demands, which may be just in themselves and perhaps also attainable, with a view to ascertaining whether the aim is worth the sacrifices involved. Should this examination yield a negative result, the above proverb must hold good in this case also, that is to say : "A lean peace of understanding must be preferred to a fat full victory."

## V.

As the last, though at the same time the most important, consideration to be kept in mind in passing judgment on the programme of the party of Right as regards war-aims, the following point must be emphasised : Let us assume that all the questions discussed above are to be answered in the affirmative, that the aims of the party of Right are just both in their nature and extent, that they are also attainable, and that the sacrifices required stand in a proper relationship to the aim ; nevertheless, there still remains for discussion the further decisive question :

Whether these same aims could not be attained better, more easily, more justly and more certainly by other means.

As I would again recall, all our present discussions turn exclusively round the question of obtaining security for



the future. The questions of the return of the booty and of full compensation are no longer under discussion at this point, since their answer is easy and self-obvious. In the question of future security, however, the point is whether a method under consideration—*e.g.*, the territorial, military or economic weakening of the disturber of the peace—whether such a method cannot be replaced by another, which would attain the same end in a better, more just and more certain manner. Every permanent weakening in the future of an enemy, who is by nature strong and capable of development, involves the danger which is described above and which is often observed in history, namely, that the other nation feels itself enslaved and hampered in its natural freedom of motion, and with the object of bursting these fetters it now prepares its defence with even greater energy than it manifested in the attack. In this way immediately after the so-called peace there arises a new condition of fermentation which cannot fail to produce new wars.

The future dangers which are called into being by brutal and excessive weakening of strong peoples are exactly the same, whether we are dealing with a people which has acted on the aggressive or on the defensive. The unconquerable energy that can be developed by a people oppressed and humiliated by a foreign conqueror is revealed in the history of the Prussian fall and the Prussian regeneration, which are expressed in the names of Jena and Leipzig. But even a nation which has acted on the aggressive may, when defeated, arouse itself to irresistible strength—and, for this, also, history furnishes examples in plenty—when the victorious conqueror, in meting out his just demands for punishment, expiation and security, transgresses the proper limits, and thus transforms his war of defence into a war of conquest and oppression. Europe owed the fifty years of peace which followed the Napoleonic wars in no small degree to the prudent moderation with which the allied Powers reduced the real disturber of the peace to harmlessness, deprived him of the booty which he had seized, but at the same time preserved his country, France, from any dismemberment, from any oppression or embitterment of the conditions of her existence.



All future dangers will, I am convinced, be most completely and certainly avoided, if, without excluding other methods of inflicting punishment and obtaining security against the convicted disturber of the peace, the emphasis is nevertheless laid on that method which in remote periods in the development of international life may not perhaps have found the appropriate soil for a fruitful sowing, but which to-day, more than any other, bears within itself the germs of strong growth and of the power to take root firmly and immovably.

I refer to the

*Organisation of Civilised Peoples resting on Law*

which to-day rightly forms the central point in all peace discussions—to Kant's *foedus pacificum*, which in *J'accuse* I have already advanced as the panacea against the recurrence of similar world-catastrophes, as the only worthy and adequate conclusion of the present tragedy of blood. All great and small nations are to belong to this league of peace, enjoying equal rights and subject to equal duties ; all alike are to be subject to a coercive force placed above them, which would once for all establish right in the place of violence. It would at the same time be the duty of this coercive force to secure actual recognition of the right, and it would be in a position to give effect to this end.

I need not here consider more closely the idea and the more detailed development of an international organisation of law, which will subject the society of States to an equal order of law, just as individuals, the burghal and territorial communities, the members of confederations and of confederate States have gradually submitted to such an order in the course of the history of mankind ; I need not here further consider this organisation of the family of States which has long been recognised by all progressive minds and by all men of insight throughout the whole world as the future aim of the development of the nations. In a later passage I will gather together the statements which the Governments of the belligerent States have made, during the peace discussions which have been in



progress since December, 1916, regarding their attitude towards a league of peace above the individual States. In the previous chapter on "Bethmann, the Annexationist," I have already proved by reference to the original documents that the Entente statesmen, and above all those of England, have since the beginning of the war placed the idea of an organised security of peace in the forefront of their programme as to war-aims. This idea constitutes the central point of President Wilson's initiative for peace. Even Germany and her allies could not avoid making a passing hypocritical reverence before the statue of the figure of Justice, enthroned above all nations, which they had hitherto mocked and reviled—no doubt with the *reservatio mentalis* that they would once more mock and revile the goddess of Justice when their military strength enabled them to do so. Yet, nevertheless, even this suspicious acknowledgment of the idea of law by hardened perpetrators of violence is not without value; it is the homage which vice pays to virtue.

If we disregard Germany, the idea of an organisation of law above the individual States has no longer any opponent among the leading statesmen of civilised nations. The more the representatives of the party of Right emphasise this demand, the more will they separate the representatives of the party of violence from the community of ideas which to-day binds together the modern civilised world with invisible threads over land and sea. The "*Société des Nations*" must be and must remain the central and the crucial point of the Entente Powers' programme as to war-aims, the method of guaranteeing the peace of the future beside which all other methods of obtaining security—whether they be of a territorial, a military or an economic character—must recede into the background. It is to this point that decisive importance must be attached on the conclusion of peace, so that any offer of peace must be refused if it does not in the first place recognise the following principles as the groundwork of an international structure of law:

Legal verdicts in place of force.  
Absolute exclusion of self-help.



Decision of *all* disputes, no matter of what character, arising between the members of the League of Peace by legal verdicts.

Prohibition of all special alliances and ententes among the members of the League of Peace.

Institution of a coercive force which must be strong enough by political, economic and military methods to prevent any breach of the peace and, if such a breach should notwithstanding arise, must be in a position to suppress it, to inflict punishment and to exact expiation.

Reduction by treaty of all armaments by land and by sea of the States belonging to the League of Peace together with the introduction of a system allowing close supervision.

In place of this, the equipment of the Central Power with a military force which will guarantee the maintenance of the order of law within the league, and its protection against those outside.

Such an international organisation of law, into the details of which I cannot enter more fully here—(it is a familiar fact that whole libraries have been written on the subject both before and during this war)—must, as I have already said, continue to be the chief point in any peace programme of the party of Right, if this party means to continue to retain the name which it justly bears, the name of a party of Right.<sup>1</sup> In this organisation of law in the future I see the only sure and at the same time the best and most just method of obtaining protection against further attacks and disturbances of the peace :

It humiliates none of the peoples joining the League of peace ;

it weakens none in its natural development ;

it protects all alike against wrong and violence ;

it relieves all from the expenditure for new armaments which even before the war had become enormous and will after the war become intolerable ;

<sup>1</sup> By the entry of the United States into the war this chief point has been placed unreservedly in the forefront of the war-aims of the Allies.



it releases immeasurable sources of income for the national budget and the national well-being of all countries ;

it conceals no pernicious germs tending to the production of new wars ; on the contrary it contains all the healthy germs for an increasingly noble and more comprehensive organisation of human society.

No method is so well adapted as this to attain properly, quickly and permanently the most important aim of the party of Right, the security of the future. This, however, by no means implies that as a consequence each one of the other methods already discussed is to be completely excluded. By no means ! For example, I for my own part would regard it as extremely desirable, if it were in any way attainable, that certain persons or circles of persons should be permanently reduced to harmlessness by any of the above-mentioned methods, even in the sharpest method which I regard as the most effective and at the same time the most just. There are, in fact, various ways leading to Rome, and alongside the broad and straight highway it is admissible at times to follow side-paths as well, on condition that one never loses sight of the main object and the main road and constantly returns to them. He who follows side-paths *only* may easily incur the danger of losing his way, of falling into marshes and thickets and indeed of perishing therein. The main high-road which leads best, most quickly and most justly to the aim of an enduring security of the future is the organisation on a basis of law of the community of nations.

For the attainment of this end no sacrifice appears to me too great, no sacrifice in life, no sacrifice in wealth and well-being.

#### GERMANY'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE IDEA OF AN "INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE OF PEACE."

I have sufficiently explained in the preceding chapter on "Bethmann, the Pacifist," the importance to be attached to that sudden, hypocritical obeisance of the German rulers before the idea of an international league of



peace, which surprised the whole world in November, 1916. What I then predicted has been fully confirmed during the later peace discussions. At the time I openly expressed my deepest distrust in the sincerity and the consistency of the new conversion of the German rulers to pacifism, and I advised the statesmen on the other side to take Herr von Bethmann at his word and to ask him whether he was in fact ready to submit to an organisation resting on law with coercive powers for the peaceful decision of all international disputes, whether he was ready to draw the immediate consequence from such a submission, that is to say to give his consent to a treaty restriction of the armaments of all the members of the international league of peace, and to confer on this league itself the right and the power to give effect to its decisions and judgments.

The question was unfortunately not addressed in this precise form to the leading German statesman, but the course of the peace discussions since the so-called German peace offer of December 12th, 1916, until to-day has equally proved how justified I was in the distrust which I felt towards the sincerity and the honesty of German Neopacifism. Not more than a month of life was vouchsafed to this child of sorrow, whose father was hunger and whose mother was the stress of war. On November 9th it was born ; on December 12th it had already fallen asleep in a sanctified death.

On November 9th we find the pompous announcement :

Through the whole of humanity there will pass a call for peaceful agreements and understandings to prevent, so far as is in human power, the recurrence of so enormous a catastrophe. This call will be so strong and so justified that it cannot fail to lead to a result. Germany will honourably join in examining any attempt to find a practical solution, and will co-operate in its possible realisation.

On December 12th in the statement of his readiness for peace negotiations there was no longer to be found a note or a hint of a pacifist world-organisation. Then the only question was that of obtaining a guarantee of "the existence, honour and liberty of evolution" of Germany and her allies. It was only this security of the one party—and that party the aggressor—which was represented



as an "appropriate basis for the establishment of a lasting peace." The sublime figure of the angel of peace which had descended from the ceilings of the world theatre, waving the palm, has vanished through the trap-door and in her place the Royal Prussian General-Chancellor (in Prussian Germany one is first of all a general and only afterwards a Chancellor) has again appeared on the stage in field-grey and top boots. Under the greenolive branch with which Herr von Bethmann as late as November had still adorned his head as he proclaimed peace, there already peeped out in December—threateningly and plainly recognisable—the pointed Pickelhaube.

It is in the highest degree interesting to trace how Prussian Germany has played with the ideas of peace since November, 1916, until the present day. One is forthwith convinced that it is in fact merely play and not earnest—merely a game in which they were primarily concerned to obtain possession of the trump card of the conclusion of peace in order later on to throw the cards on the table, exclaiming to their opponents: "Now I won't play any longer with you."

Let us note the attitude adopted by the German statesmen towards the problem of peace—first of all in the exchange of notes with their opponents and with President Wilson in the period from December, 1916, until the breach of diplomatic relations with America (February, 1917).

A. In the German offer of peace of December 12th, 1916, there is, as has already been observed, no mention of a pacifist organisation of the nations: The proposals of the Central Powers "have for their object a guarantee of the existence, honour, and liberty of evolution for their nations," and at the same time form "according to their firm belief (that is to say, according to the belief of Germany and her allies) an appropriate basis for the establishment of a lasting peace."

This offer of peace was, as is well known, accompanied by speeches by the Chancellor and orders by the Emperor to the army and the navy which overflowed with the glory and the value of the victories achieved. The army order of



the Emperor of December 12th, the day on which the offer of peace is also dated, begins with the words : "Soldiers ! Under the influence of the victory which you have gained by your bravery I and the monarchs of the States in faithful alliance with me have made an offer of peace to the enemy."

In his address to the troops at Mühlhausen a few days later the Emperor said : "In the feeling that we are absolutely victorious I have proposed to our enemies to discuss with me regarding further war or peace." He also spoke of a "judgment of God" which had "broken" upon his enemies (see Wolff's Telegram of December 15th).

In the same way in his speech in the Reichstag in which he intimated the offer of peace the Chancellor emphasised the glorious successes which Germany, in union with her allies, had gained on all fronts in the East and the West, and was still daily continuing to gain. Nevertheless : "Our strength has not made our ears deaf to our responsibility before God, before our own people and before humanity." (Why did this subtlety of hearing not manifest itself two and a half years earlier ?) Like the Emperor, the Chancellor also speaks of the "struggle in which Germany has fought victoriously," the issue of which now enables Germany "to stretch her hand for peace."

As usual, the Chancellor on this occasion, which was least of all fitted for the purpose, again, inevitably, raised the question of the guilt of the war in the way which has now become habitual with him :

In August, 1914, our enemies challenged the superiority of power in a world war : to-day we raise the question of peace, which is a question of humanity.

The "plans of conquest and annihilation" entertained by the enemy who had provoked the war are also of course to be found in the Chancellor's peace speech. None of the old familiar litany is missing. But also nothing new has been introduced. One searches in vain in the speech of December 12th and in the peace offer of the same day for even a trace of the pacifist ideas for which the Chancellor had apparently been so enthusiastic a month earlier. The offered peace is a peace without pacifism. *Pacifismus vacat.*



B. There follows the German Note to the President of the United States of December 26th—Germany's answer to Wilson's Note delivered in Berlin on December 21st. Wilson, as is well known, had addressed an invitation in similar terms to all the belligerents requesting them to inform him of "their views as to the terms upon which the war might be concluded and the arrangements which would be deemed satisfactory as a guarantee against its renewal or the kindling of any similar conflict in the future."

The answer of the Imperial Government to this inquiry was evasive both as regards the special peace conditions for bringing *this* war to an end and as regards the general measures to be taken against the repetition of *similar* wars. The communication of the special conditions of peace was not agreed to; this, according to the intention of the German Government, was to take place by "immediate exchange of views" between the "delegates of the belligerent States"—neutral Powers being therefore excluded—at some neutral place.

"The great work of preventing future wars" was, however, to "be begun only after the end of the present struggle of the nations. The German Government will when the moment shall have come be ready with pleasure to collaborate fully with the United States in this exalted task."

This frigidly evasive answer of the German Government, disposing in a few empty sentences of the noble pacifist proclamation of the President of the United States which forms a milestone in international life, was a worthy successor of the so-called peace offer of December 12th. Any illusion as to the good faith and the sincerity of Bethmann's November pacifism which might have been left behind by the December offer would have been completely dispersed by the Christmas Note of December 26th. In the direct peace negotiations which Germany's delegates were to conduct with the delegates of the other side "at some neutral place," the only neutral element which Germany thought proper to admit was in fact the neutral place. Neutral men and neutral ideas were to be banished from the seat of the negotiations like the onlookers at a game of cards who, according to a common superstition among players,



bring misfortune to those engaged in the game. President Wilson, along with his pacifism, has to wait outside on the doormat until Germany, the strong and lucky player, has brought off the great *coup*, and cleaned out his opponents. Then the doors of the assembly room will be opened, and Mr. Wilson, along with other neutral gentlemen, will be permitted to enter the sacred halls in order to develop his world-peace programme (which can no longer do any harm) amid the derisive laughter of the German rulers, army-leaders and diplomatists who already have their victorious peace in their pockets. In a later passage I shall have occasion to return to the readiness of Germany, as "full of pleasure" as it was platonic, to collaborate in the "great work of peace."

C. On December 30th, 1916, there was issued the answer of the Entente Powers to the German offer of peace of December 12th. This answer, as is well known, declined to enter into peace negotiations on the basis of the German offer :

1. Because the war on the side of the Central Powers was not—as they once more asserted—a war of defence but a war of aggression ;

2. because a mere suggestion without statements of terms could not be regarded as an offer of peace but only as a war "manœuvre" ;

3. because the "war-map" put forward on another occasion by the leading German statesman as the standard for the conditions of peace could not be recognised by Germany's enemies as the standard ;

4. because the outrages committed by the aggressors, against both belligerents and neutrals, demand penalties, reparation and guarantees for the security of the world, which the offer of negotiations made by the Central Powers avoid in every respect. So far as guarantees for the future were concerned, no peace was possible so long as they (the Allies) "have not brought about a settlement calculated to end, once for all, forces which have constituted a perpetual menace to the nations, and to afford the only effective guarantees for the future security of the world."



This note of refusal of the Entente Powers was answered by the German Government in a comprehensive document of January 11th, 1917, in which they again protested that Germany and her allies "were obliged to take up arms to defend their freedom and their existence" and that they now regarded this, "their war-aim, as attained." After an equally long and untenable account of the origin of the war and of the method of waging war on the part of their opponents, of the alleged violation of Belgium's duties of neutrality, etc., the German Note concludes with the statement :

Germany and her allies made an honest attempt to terminate the war and pave the way for an understanding among the belligerents. The Imperial Government declares that it depended solely on the decision of our enemies whether the road to peace should be taken or not. The enemy Governments have refused to take this road. On them falls the full responsibility for the continuation of bloodshed. But the four allied Powers will prosecute the fight with calm trust and confidence in their good cause until a peace has been gained which guarantees to their own peoples honour, existence, and freedom of development and gives all the Powers of the European Continent the benefit of working, united in mutual esteem, at the solution of the great problems of civilisation.

It will be observed how here again the special measures of security to be taken in the interests of the Central Powers and their allies are placed in the foreground, and Bethmann's pacifist ideas of November 9th fade away to the shadowy formula that the European States are to have the "benefit of working, united in mutual esteem, at the solution of the great problems of civilisation." No injustice is done to this Note, if there is inscribed on it as its motto : *Le Pacifisme est mort, vive le militarisme !*

D. On January 12th appeared the answer of the Entente Powers to Wilson's invitation of December 19th. As distinguished from the German answer the Entente Powers placed at the head of all their discussions the statement

that they associate themselves whole-heartedly with the plan of creating a League of the Nations to ensure peace and justice throughout the world. They recognise all the advantages that would accrue to the cause of humanity and civilisation by the establishment of international settlements designed to avoid violent conflicts between



the nations—settlements which ought to be attended by the sanctions necessary to assure their execution, and thus to prevent fresh aggressions from being made easier by an apparent security.

Subjoined to this definition of the most important war-aim, the security of an enforceable peace of law, the Entente Powers then answered in the utmost detail Wilson's inquiry as to the special conditions which they advanced for ending the present war. To enter in detail into this long list of territorial desires lies outside the scope of my work. The manner in which I judge these desires appears from the rules of principle laid down above, according to which the war-aims of a party who has been attacked are, in my opinion, to be appraised. The ground of law, on which the demands, viewed generally, of such a party are based, does not justify all their individual demands. These latter I recognise as justified in so far as they are restricted within the limits of the general principles here advanced; in so far as they transgress these limits, I reject them from my point of view as unjustified, inexpedient and dangerous for the future.

#### TERRITORIAL ALTERATIONS.

The examination of all these individual demands in the light of the general principles which I have advanced constitutes so comprehensive and so momentous a subject that it would in itself require a whole book. To-day, after the entry of America into the war and the victory of the Russian Revolution, such a task appears all the more superfluous, inasmuch as these new factors in the war, who are at the same time new parties to the peace, will at once remove—and have indeed already removed—from the January programme of the Entente Powers all that in any way transcends the limits indicated in the six principles which I have established above. The peace programme of the United States, as well as that of the provisional Government of Russia, excludes any war-aim which could in the remotest manner bear the character of conquest, of annexation, of violent oppression, or of the transfer of foreign peoples.

In view of all these facts I may spare myself the trouble



of going more fully into all these questions of detail. At this stage, I would merely emphasise one general consideration which requires to be kept well in mind throughout this discussion. No one who rejects my point of view and sees in a transfer of territory an appropriate means of obtaining security for the future—and almost the whole of the public opinion of Germany occupies this contrary point of view, so far as Germany's future is concerned—can logically reproach the Entente Powers if in their January Note they also believed that they could only raise their future building of peace on a largely altered European map. In order to judge correctly the extent of their claims, it is necessary to bear in mind :

(1) as the governing consideration, that on the one side we are concerned with a party of right (war of defence) and on the other with a party of violence (war of aggression).

(2) that on the side of the party of right it is in the first place merely desires for territorial changes that have manifested themselves, whereas on the side of the party of violence acts involving changes of territory of the most important character exist as *faits accomplis* (Poland, Flanders, Lithuania, Courland, Livonia).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Think of the joy over the "liberation" of Riga, which has "again become German," the "old German Hansa town," of the solemn entry of the Emperor and his speech of September 6th: "Riga is free. . . . A town founded by the old German Hanseatic spirit, with a German history behind it, a town which has always endeavoured to maintain its old Germanism, has gone through bitter times. It is by the German Army that this town has again been freed from its long oppression. . . . Here again the Lord of Hosts has heard our prayers." According to Wolff's report of September 8th, "the town is still intoxicated with joy over the entry of the Germans." The correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* heard it said in every street in the conquered town: "For three years we have been waiting for you to liberate us. . . . Good morning in Germany!" Indeed the glad tidings penetrated as far as the columns of *Vorwärts*, which, as we know, repudiates all conquests: "The fairest booty, however, is that the chief town of the Baltic, the ancient foundation of Hanseatic merchants, has been brought into our hands. Riga is German!" And all this scarcely two months after the famous resolution of the Reichstag in favour of an understanding!



(3) that apart from the occupancy of territory to which effect has already been given there is still a series of further appropriations which are intended on the side of the party of violence, and the preparations for these are already more or less plainly recognisable (Austria's intentions on South Slav territories, Bulgaria's intentions on Macedonia, etc.).

If all these considerations are borne in mind—even if it be assumed that the Entente Note of January 12th still exists in its full extent (which is not the case)—one cannot fail to arrive at the conclusion that the territorial alterations *desired* by the Entente, when compared with those *already realised* and still to be realised on the part of the Central Powers, are extremely modest and anything but exaggerated. These remarks, it should once more be observed and emphasised, hold only from the point of view which is exclusively emphasised on the German side, that is to say, the need of territorial security. It is precisely this standpoint which leads to the complete justification of the January demands of the Entente. To criticise these demands is permissible in one who, like the author of these lines, rejects any territorial security of the individual State, and who looks for salvation only in the security in law to be extended to all. It is, however, *not* permissible to one who, like the German Government, occupies more than any other the point of view of obtaining security by force, and has already during the war given expression to this view by decisive measures.

All these points must be borne in mind, along with the main consideration that those annexations which have already been consummated and those which are still to be consummated are conquests of the aggressor, if one wishes to appraise correctly the territorial wishes of the opposing party who stand on the ground of law which belongs to the side that is attacked. If the aggressor is so far removed as the Central Powers are from the line on which peace negotiations can properly begin, from the line of restitution, reparation and future guarantees—if the aggressor still affects to be the defender, and has even in the course



of the war appropriated a fair portion of the territorial "securities" which on his mendacious assertion he requires for his future tranquillity—if he is already seeking to carry home a considerable part of the property he has stolen and even proclaims his booty as a lawful acquisition—how can it occasion any surprise if the parties attacked, who are still on the defensive, put forward far-reaching, *very* far-reaching demands of a territorial nature which in their opinion are calculated to weaken their chief adversary and his allies and to render them harmless for all time to come? I have already emphasised above that I, from my point of view, regard *this* way of obtaining securities for the future by transference of land or by weakening the enemy territorially, as in no way to be recommended, that on the contrary I regard it as mistaken and as calculated to defeat its own object. But if the opponents of the Central Powers, in agreement in principle with these Powers themselves, are of a different opinion—if they believe that they can only raise an enduring building of peace, secured in law and in fact, on the groundwork of certain territorial alterations, it must be conceded that these territorial ambitions, as those of the party of right, are in no way exorbitant, that they are indeed extremely modest in comparison with the territorial gains which the party of violence has already realised and the further gains proposed for the future.

I must here restrict myself to these general observations on the territorial demands advanced by the two sides. Much as I may *understand* the demands of the party attacked, I am convinced on the other hand that the edifice of world-peace, the construction of which we have in view as the most important peace aim, does not require for its foundation any far-reaching changes of territory, but that on the contrary it will be all the more surely based the more its foundation walls correspond to the former territorial frontiers. In addition to the obvious restoration of all conquered territory, the free right of self-determination of the nations wherever great national groups are oppressed or violated by other nationalities, the allotment of certain frontier territories to the State to which they belong



and wish to belong according to language, sentiment and culture—with these limitations territorial alterations also could, if need be, be justified on the conclusion of peace, and would bring no dangers to the future community of nations. All territorial alterations, however, which go beyond these narrowest limits would be of evil ; they would not solidify, but would undermine in advance, the ground on which the building of peace is to be erected.

E. What, now, was the action of Germany in reply to the Entente Note of January 12th ? The reply is contained in Germany's Note of January 31st, 1917, to the Government of the United States of America. This Note, signed by Zimmermann, the Secretary of State, also furnished the answer to a new message of peace addressed by President Wilson to the American Senate on January 22nd. It concluded with the announcement of the extended closed area and the unrestricted submarine warfare. The old litany of the war of defence was once more brought forward ; the intention to effect an incorporation of Belgium was denied—an intention to which four weeks later effect had already been given to a very great extent, even if not in name.<sup>1</sup> Once again pompous phrases about the efforts made to induce England and her allies to "return to international law and to respect the law of the freedom of the seas" ; about the British lust of power, about "new devastations, new distress and new death" were trans-

<sup>1</sup> About the same time as the above Note from Germany to the United States, an interview took place between Gerard, the American Ambassador, and Herr von Bethmann, in which the American diplomatist asked definitely what were the German peace conditions regarding Belgium. Herr von Bethmann who until then had always avoided such questions, was now at last compelled to admit that Germany, under the title of guarantees, would be restrained to keep possession of the forts of Liège and Namur as well as other forts and garrisons, further the railroad lines, the ports and other means of communication, that it would have to exercise commercial control over Belgium, retain a large army there while not allowing the Belgians to maintain any army. All this in order that Belgium might not become an "outpost of Great Britain" (See Gerard's revelations in the *Daily Telegraph* [*My Four Years in Germany*, p. 265].) Herr von Bethmann has offered a weak and very involved *démenti* of this account of Gerard.



mitted through the world until, to cut a long story short, there appeared the decision to abandon every restriction on submarine warfare and to sink without warning in the barred zone, all ships no matter what their nationality, character or destination might be.

This, however, is by the way. What does this last German announcement say in reply to the pacifist proposals of President Wilson? The German Government declares that their

joyful collaboration is assured to all efforts which aim at the prevention of future wars. . . . The Imperial Government has taken cognisance of the contents of the message with the serious attention due to the President's utterances, which are inspired by a high sense of responsibility. It affords it great satisfaction to declare that the guiding lines of this important declaration agree, to a wide extent, with the principles and wishes which Germany professes. Hereto belongs, in the first place, the right of all nations to self-government and equal rights.

In the speech of the German Chancellor before the Main Committee of the Reichstag (January 31st, 1917), which accompanied the publication of the foregoing Note, Herr von Bethmann spoke a great deal, it is true, of the "question of the guilt for the continuation of the war" (in saying which, of course, he laid the responsibility exclusively on his opponents), he had much to say of the preposterous peace conditions of his opponents, who threatened the German people and their allies with "annihilation, want and ignominy," of the "fight to the end" to which Germany has been challenged, etc. He skimmed, however, with a few empty observations over Wilson's ideas of a future organisation of peace of the nations, which the latter had made the subject of a long and insistent message to the American Senate. These observations of the Chancellor on January 31st are specially interesting inasmuch as they throw a significant light on the earnestness and sincerity of his alleged new conversion to pacifism in the beginning of November, 1916. Herr von Bethmann contented himself with the following platonic observations on the problem of the pacifist organisation of the future, which had just at that moment become a highly living question and had been put by Wilson in the forefront of all his efforts :



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President Wilson's message to Congress shows his sincere wish to restore peace to the world. Many of his maxims agree with our aims—namely, the freedom of the seas, the abolition of the system of balance of power, which is always bound to lead to new difficulties, equal rights of all nations and the open door to trade.

These five lines are all that Herr von Bethmann has to say to President Wilson's peace programme which comprises nearly four complete newspaper columns. The reader should observe the carefully considered reservations expressed towards Wilson's ideas, both in Zimmermann's Note and in Bethmann's speech. In the Note we read : " The guiding lines of Wilson's declaration agree, *to a wide extent* " with the principles and the wishes of the German Government. In the speech of the Chancellor we read that " many " of the maxims advanced by Wilson agree with our aims. Of the maxims which thus coincide, it is very significant that only those are emphasised which, in the German view, would be advantageous for Germany, inasmuch as they would assure for her in the future the freedom of movement and of development which she is alleged to lack. (It should be observed that all these fine things which Germany alleges she lacks, such as the freedom of the seas, the open door, etc., she really possessed in the fullest measure before the war, and lost only as a result of the insensate criminal provocation of the war, that is to say by her own fault.) As against this, the essential aims of Wilson's programme are, on the other hand, passed over in carefully considered silence. In the announcements of the German statesmen there is nowhere any mention of the creation of a league of peace, over and between States, equipped with real coercive power, of the introduction of democratic principles in all countries (" government by the consent of the governed ") of the restriction of armaments, which in future are to be exclusively an instrument of order and not of aggression or of violence.

In order to be able rightly to appraise the pettiness and the jejuneness of the Chancellor's statement of his " agreement," let us hear the following noble sentences from the world-wide peace programme of the American President—sentences which represent a landmark in the development of modern international life :



In every discussion of the peace that must end this war it is taken for granted that peace must be followed by definite concert of the Powers which will make it virtually impossible that any such catastrophe should ever overwhelm us again. Every lover of mankind, every sane and thoughtful man, must take that for granted. . . .

To take part in such a service will be the opportunity for which they (i.e. the American people) have sought to prepare themselves by the very principles and purposes of their polity and the approved practices of their Government ever since the days when they set up a new nation in the high and honourable hope that it might in all that it was and did show mankind the way to liberty. . . .

Mere agreements may not make peace sure. It will be absolutely necessary that a force be created as a guarantor of the permanency of the settlement so much greater than the force of any nation now engaged or any alliance hitherto formed or projected, that no nation, no probable combination of nations, could face or withstand it. If the peace presently to be made is to endure, it must be a peace made secure by the organised major force of mankind. . . .

There must be, not a balance of power, but a community of power ; not organised rivalries, but an organised common peace. . . .

The equality of nations upon which peace must be founded, if it is to last, must be an equality of rights ; the guarantees exchanged must neither recognise nor imply a difference between big nations and small ; between those that are powerful and those that are weak. Right must be based upon the common strength, not upon the individual strength, of the nations upon whose concert peace will depend. . . .

And there is a deeper thing involved than even equality of right among organised nations. No peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognise and accept the principle that Governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no right anywhere exists to hand peoples about from potentate to potentate as if they were property. . . .

The free, constant, unthreatened intercourse of nations is an essential part of the process of peace and of development. It need not be difficult either to define or to secure the freedom of the seas if the Governments of the world sincerely desire to come to an agreement concerning it. It is a problem closely connected with the limitation of naval armaments and the co-operation of the navies of the world in keeping the seas at once free and safe, and the question of limiting naval armaments opens the wider and perhaps more difficult question of the limitation of armies and of all programmes of military preparation. . . .

The question of armaments, whether on land or on sea, is the most immediately and intensely practical question connected with the future fortunes of nations and of mankind. . . .

I am proposing government by the consent of the governed ; that freedom of the seas which in international conference after conference representatives of the people of the United States have urged with the eloquence of those who are the convinced disciples of liberty ; and that



moderation of armaments which makes of armies and navies a power for order merely, not an instrument of aggression or of selfish violence.

These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And yet they are the principles and policies of forward-looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.

From this world-comprehensive programme in favour of an assured order of international law, what is it that the Chancellor selects to demonstrate his concurrence? The "freedom of the seas," the "equal rights of nations," the "open door"! That is all. I have already explained elsewhere what Germany understands under the "freedom of the seas." It understands the right and the freedom to provoke and conduct wars without restraint by land, and at the same time to be protected by sea from any blockade, any stoppage of imports, any interruption of her shipping. Freedom of the seas on German lips merely means an improvement in the military and economic position of Germany in future wars. Domination on land and freedom at sea—in this sense the German Chancellor concurs in Wilson's demand for freedom of the seas.

It is true that the Chancellor also strives for the removal of the former dangerous and delusive system of the balance of power in Europe. The "equal rights of nations" and the "open door" are also dear to his heart. In these points also, as he emphasises, his views coincide with those of the President of the United States. But here again, in this partial concurrence, from underneath the beautifully folded toga of peace there peeps very plainly the Prussian militaristic cloven hoof. "The abolition of the system of the balance of power which is always bound to lead to new difficulties." This is very fine! But what is to take the place of this outworn and rusty system of equilibrium? Is it by any chance Wilson's league of peace above the individual States? Far from it! In the speech of the Chancellor not a word is to be found expressing concurrence in this. German preponderance is to take the place of European equilibrium—that is all! Under the protecting pinions of the Prussian eagle the Continent is to receive repose and peace, the repose of the church-yard, the peace of bondage.



As to the meaning of "equal rights of nations" on German lips, one should inquire of the Poles, the Danes, and the inhabitants of Alsace-Lorraine—particularly of the Poles of Prussia who are still kept in unfreedom and treated as citizens of inferior rank, after a century and a half during which they have belonged to the Prussian State; this is the case even now, when they are called upon to shed their blood in streams for the King of Prussia fighting against their own race, even now when professedly steps are being taken to liberate their kindred on the other side of the Prussian frontier, and to bless them with their old royal glory. Whereas the former Boer Republics of South Africa, which have only been united to the British World Empire for fifteen years, already enjoy complete autonomy, complete freedom in the exercise of their civil rights, in their language and culture, whereas their leader Botha is Prime Minister in British South Africa and their sons are voluntarily fighting at the side of the English whom their fathers confronted in battle a few years ago—whereas on the other side, in the case of the English, the most astonishing process of amalgamation has been completed in fifteen years, on this side in the case of the Prussians a century and a half do not suffice to realise even the first beginnings of those "equal rights of nations," which Herr von Bethmann has suddenly recognised as his ideal and as the object of his endeavours.

It is known to everyone that the position of the Danish compulsory Prussians, who have now for half a century had the honour and the pleasure of living under the glorious sceptre of the Hohenzollerns, is no better than that of their Polish comrades in misfortune. And with regard to the fate of the Alsatians and Lorrainers it is unnecessary to waste a word. On all the frontiers of Prussia and of Germany an unreconciled and therefore unreconcilable irredenta raises its head. That is the "equal rights of nations" which Herr von Bethmann acknowledges, in alleged agreement with President Wilson.

But this, however, is not the point. The chief matter in the statements of the Chancellor on January 31st, 1917, is not what he says, but what he does not say. The leading German statesman passes over in silence the crucial



point of Wilson's peace programme and also its most important presupposition.

The preliminary condition (to speak with Kant) of a future world peace is, for the President of the United States, the establishment of a democratic system of government, of a "government by the consent of the governed" in each individual country belonging to the league of peace. On this point the politeness of the Chancellor compels silence.

The main support of the essential building of peace designed by Wilson is the establishment of an organised Power standing above all the States, and, as the inevitable corollary of this, the restriction of the armaments of each individual member of the league of peace in favour of the power with which the whole is to be equipped. But on this decisive point also in Wilson's message of peace, on this crux of any pacifist world organisation, eloquent silence prevails in the Chancellor's speech. The extent of the agreement between the Chancellor and the President does not in fact go so far as this. As things stand to-day in Germany, a German statesman neither can nor may rise to such thoughts regarding the future as can alone be fruitful—or if he himself should be willing to risk the Icarus flight to such heights of humanity, he would soon be brought down by the defensive artillery of the powers of Orcus who still prevail in Germany; he would soon be crushed and laid low.<sup>1</sup>

F. A further stage in the German attitude to a pacifist organisation of the nations is found in the Chancellor's speech in the Reichstag on February 28th, 1917. I have already dealt with this speech in an earlier passage in so far as it concerns the annexationist aims of Germany. So far as pacifist aims are concerned, it is quickly disposed of. Exactly like the first of Bethmann's peace speeches of December 12th, 1916, it contains under the rubric, "Pacifism," the simple word "*vacat*." After the outbreak of

<sup>1</sup> This fate has at a later date befallen Herr von Bethmann, apart from the above considerations, merely because he fell under the suspicion, for which in my opinion there was no foundation, that he might in a moment of weakness be converted from a pseudo-pacifist into a real pacifist.



the conflict with America, after the breach of diplomatic relations on the part of the United States, the pacifist demeanour no longer served any purpose. The increased stringency of the submarine warfare, and the attitude of America thereby produced, led to the disappearance of any hope of being able to purchase the neutrality of the United States by a half-hearted and ambiguous consideration of the great ideas of humanity advanced by the leader of the American people. Consequently the pacifist ballast was promptly and resolutely thrown overboard, the Pickelhaube was again placed on the head, and the German war-aim was shortly and concisely announced to be as follows :

To put an end to the war by an enduring peace, which will give us compensation for all the injury we have suffered, and which will give to a strong Germany an assured existence and an assured future. That is our aim, nothing more and nothing less.

Nothing more and nothing less ! Nothing *less* than compensation and the future security of Germany ! What is meant by such compensation and future security when spoken by the Chancellor, I have already explained in an earlier passage.

Nothing *more* than compensation and the future security of Germany ! This again serves to characterise the attitude of Germany towards a future pacifist configuration of the community of nations. For a "strong" Germany an assured existence and an assured future are to be gained. Nothing more ; the rulers of Germany strive for nothing beyond this. This is a renewed and distinct denial of any idea of a general guarantee of peace, of any guarantee of peace by means of an organisation resting on law. The emphasis laid on their own strength, on their own security, merely implies the continuation of the former policy of violence and of armaments in an enlarged and improved edition, the better security of the frontier from the strategic point of view, the increased power of Germany in a military, political and economic respect—in short a better preparation for new conflicts and new wars !

G. The same one-sided train of thought, the same contemptuous disregard of all pacifist ideas of the future also recurs in the Chancellor's speech of May 15th, 1917. That



the Chancellor at that date—thirty-three months after the beginning of the war—maintained unaltered his previous annexationist programme, with the concurrence of the civil parties, is a fact which I have already mentioned elsewhere. In connection with our present discussion it deserves to be specially emphasised that, in the course of this speech also, he uttered not a word on the subject of any fundamental change of system in the relations between the nations, not a word regarding an organisation of the community of nations resting on law, in place of the former anarchy and competition of power. On this occasion also the Chancellor put forward the future security of Germany as the exclusive German aim, without devoting a word to the security of the peace of the world :

If we are now standing in battle almost against the whole world, this is exclusively in order to assure our existence and to lay firmly the future of the nation—(Lively applause among the Central Parties).

With this speech of the Chancellor, his swan-song uttered two months before his departure, the chain which began with the first peace speech of December 12th, 1916, is completed. The wheel has come full circle. Here as there we find the same point of departure : Germany has been attacked and is waging a war of defence. Here as there we meet the same conclusion : Germany must secure herself against new attacks by “ real ” means of protection. Here as there we find merely the thought of their own security by increased power, the repudiation of any idea of a general security by increasing the strength of law. As at the beginning, so at the end of the development there is no mention of Pacifism. *Pacifismus vacat.*

The European-pacifist illumination from the first November days of 1916 has again given way to the Prussian-militaristic obscurity which has at all times befogged the political horizon of all German Rulers and statesmen and of all authoritative party-leaders, and clouded their spiritual vision. Then, in November, 1916, the scriptural saying appeared to be about to be fulfilled even in Germany : “ Let there be light, and there was light.” Meanwhile, however, it has again become without form and void in German lands and no spirit of God moves upon the face



of the waters. The perpetually blind, who appeared for a moment to be on the point of vision, have again fallen into even deeper blindness than before, and it becomes more and more clear that their eyes will not see until an operation for cataract has been cruelly and ruthlessly performed.

#### FIRST SPECIAL PEACE, AND THEN WORLD PEACE ?

At the conclusion of this survey I should again like to emphasise the subtle distinction in time which the German Government, while still professing Pacifism, was anxious to draw between the immediate peace negotiations and the later guarantees of peace. The answer of December 26th addressed to the Government of the United States, which has already been mentioned above, draws a precise distinction between :

(a) the "immediate meeting of delegates of the belligerent States" for the purpose of an "immediate exchange of views" on the conditions which would put an end to the present war.

(b) the "great work of preventing future wars" to be undertaken later "after the end of the present struggle of the nations."

According to Germany's intention the neutral States were *not* to participate at the conference of the belligerents. At the later peace congress they were to be allowed to participate.

The artificial and carefully considered distinction which is thus drawn between the two peace conferences, both in regard to the time at which they should be held and with regard to those who should participate, is sufficient to betray clearly the hidden thoughts which prompted the German Government in their specious expressions of sympathy for Wilson's peace aims. This distinction in itself, quite apart from the special peace demands of Germany, quite apart from the greater or less degree of sincerity in its "pacifist" confessions, represented an unbridgable gulf between the attitude of Germany on the one hand and that of the Entente Powers and of America on the other.



For the Entente Powers and for America it is not the present agreement with regard to the individual demands on both sides that is the question of primary importance, and the later organisation of the peace of the world that is the subsidiary matter. For them the permanent guarantee of peace by international organisation stands in the forefront as the first and most important subject of the peace now to be concluded, and all the individual demands—whether more or less justified or moderate—are intended, when taken together, merely to serve the one end of obtaining a permanent guarantee of peace. A special peace which ignores this most important point would have been rejected by the Entente Powers even at an earlier date, and now after the entrance of America as a party to the war there can no longer be any question of such a peace. The *modus procedendi* proposed by Germany, involving a division in the peace negotiations, and a distinction between those entitled to attend, was obviously devised to meet the wishes and the needs of Germany, but with equal obviousness it was opposed to the wishes and the needs of the Entente Powers and to the intentions of Wilson. The German potentates and their hungry people attached very great importance to the “conqueror’s” peace, represented by the situation at that time, which they feared might soon be converted into its opposite by the course of events. They were and are, however, indifferent to the later pacifist organisation: on the contrary, by virtue of all their inner feelings and traditions, it is an abomination to them. They will never voluntarily follow the pacifist path to its logical conclusion; they will never submit to enforceable decisions in international disputes; they will never recognise an order transcending the individual States, raised above their idol of sovereignty; above all they will never allow the sharp, gleaming sword to be taken from their hand in favour of an executive authority placed above them. Of this there can be no doubt in the mind of anyone who knows Prussian Germany, who has rightly grasped the inherited and acquired characteristics of the Hohenzollern family. This explains why the most important subject of negotiation was consigned into the back chamber. This explains the desire first of all to bring



home the harvest of blood and then to leave the league of peace—to be the league of peace. This explains William's exclamation to Wilson, while they were still pleasantly chatting together (if we may adapt the words of Heine): "Leave me to announce the peace; afterwards, when we get home, the other thing will come all right."

The "other thing" which will come right later is Wilson's league of peace. The immediate object which they want to "announce," that is to say, to dictate forthwith, is the special peace with the enemy.

If Germany's enemies, if America, had concurred in this separation of the two subjects of peace, and if, contrary to all probability, the special peace so ardently desired by Germany had come into being, it is possible to wager a hundred to one that the later peace congress, like the Hague Conferences, would once more have failed on the opposition of Germany and her allies, or at least would have arrived at a highly unsatisfactory result. Whether the harvest of victory which Germany would have reaped from the special peace would have been greater or less in extent, greater or less in value, the freedom from the oppressive and stifling weight of this war of exhaustion would automatically have led to a new revival of the old Prussian militaristic views and ambitions in those controlling Germany's destiny. The success which had not been gained on the first occasion would have been hoped for from a further attempt. They would have gone on singing the same song in perhaps a different key, and if the world peace-conference had ever come into being, its results, even on the most favourable estimate, would have been highly platonic; the child born of such a forced marriage would have been a homunculus, a being without vigour and strength, without flesh and blood.

"Gentlemen, I thank you"—with these politely spoken words—I see the picture plainly before me—the German Chancellor-General would have risen from the council table after the conclusion of the special conference. And when the others would have exclaimed to him as he withdrew: "But your Excellency, the Congress for World Peace!" he would no doubt have grasped his head: "Ach so! The Congress for World Peace! I had quite



forgotten it. Well then, gentlemen, in this respect I am still prepared for 'joyful co-operation' and I look forward with great pleasure to your further communications . . ."

He spake, and sideways in the copse withdrew.

#### BETHMANN AND MICHAELIS.<sup>1</sup>

On the landing place of the Royal Palace at Berlin, on both sides of the main entrance, are two beautiful pieces of sculpture in bronze, a gift of the Emperor Nicholas I to King Frederic William IV. Two nude young figures are breaking in with the strength of their hands two fiery race-horses who are struggling forwards, and it is clear that success attends their efforts. "The horse-tamers" is the official title of the group of statuary. The popular voice in Berlin, however, calls it "Progress Checked and Retrogression Encouraged," as it was dubbed by a wit in the reactionary 'fifties, in order to characterise the spirit of the Royal House, whose entrance they adorn.

Unless all signs are deceptive, the present occupant of this house in carrying out his promise as to the franchise will not be unfaithful to the spirit which animated his forbears towards any development in the direction of freedom. Once again progress will be checked and retrogression encouraged. In 1908 the Prussian people was promised the "organic further development" of its outworn franchise, in April, 1917 the abolition of the class franchise and the introduction of the direct and secret vote, and on July 11th, 1917 it was finally promised the creation of the equal franchise. In the instruction to the Minister of State countersigned by the Prussian Prime Minister, von Bethmann Hollweg, it was expressly stated that the [draft measure to be laid before the Landtag of the Monarchy for its consideration was to be framed on the basis of the equal franchise and was to be introduced at such an early date "that the next elections could take place on the basis of the new franchise." Unfortunately, nothing was said as to when the next elections should take place, and consequently the date for the introduction of the Franchise Bill was indefinitely postponed. In the same

<sup>1</sup> Appendix written in August, 1917.



way, the manner in which the Franchise Bill is to be carried through against the Junker three-class Parliament and the feudal Upper House, whose consent to every law is necessary in Prussia, is left uncertain. Finally, while it is true that an equal franchise is promised, nothing is said of universal franchise (in the sense of Article 20 of the Imperial Constitution), so that arbitrary categories of citizens may still be excluded from the right to vote.

Despite these obvious defects and gaps in the royal decree, giving it the character merely of a specious concession (*ut aliquid fecisse videatur*), the man who dared to show even the mere phantom of democratic development to the Prussian people after three years of the sufferings of war, the man who dared to show the Prussian Junkers even the mere bogey of a diminution of power, Herr von Bethmann, three days after the issue of this decree, was a dead man.

His successor, Dr. Michaelis, the pious Christian nominee of the even more pious Empress, of the Crown Prince, of Hindenburg and Ludendorff, the former "Commissioner for food," who, without any consultation with leading members of Parliament, behind the backs of the people and the people's representatives, suddenly descended like a *deus ex machina* from the clear sky to the seat of the highest official in the Empire—Herr Dr. Georg Michaelis, the brand new Chancellor and Colonel, delivered his great speech in the Reichstag on taking up office on July 19th, 1917. The new Prime Minister frigidly disposed of the equal franchise for Prussia by stating that "after the issue of the All-Highest's message of July 11th on the franchise in Prussia, he as a matter of course assumed its standpoint." So far as concerns the policy of the Empire, in comparing the speech in which the new Chancellor outlines his programme with all the announcements of his predecessor, one involuntarily recalls the words of Gretchen in Faust :

That more or less is what the Parson says,  
Although the words are slightly different !<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Ungefähr sagt das der Pfarrer auch  
Nur mit ein bischen andern Worten !]



On all points Bethmann's successor has in substance the same outlook as his predecessor ; it is only in the form that he expresses himself even more cautiously and obscurely than his predecessor, in order not to offend any of the various groups of the Reichstag.

Within the scope of my book, which was already completed at the time of Bethmann's resignation, I cannot enter into a detailed discussion of the situation which has been occasioned by the new Chancellorship. Still less can I consider the future possibilities, to which the new man may sooner or later be urged by the course of military and economic developments and by the popular feelings thereby evoked. If I have elsewhere spoken of the possibility, and indeed the probability, that Bethmann, the "Offerer of Peace," might gradually become the "Pleader for Peace," this prophecy is only altered to the extent that "Bethmann, the Offerer of Peace," will now be followed by "Michaelis, the Pleader for Peace."

The following are to be emphasised as the most important points which emerge from the speech in which the new Chancellor outlines his programme :

I. The agreement of the new Chancellor with his predecessor in the question of the origin of war :

We must every day keep before our eyes the events which took place three years ago, which are historically firmly established and which prove that we were forced into the war. Russia's military preparations and her secret mobilisation constituted a great danger for Germany. To have taken part in a conference, during which the mobilisation would have proceeded further, would have been an act of political suicide.

Herr Dr. Michaelis then further asserts, still following the usual lines, that the English statesmen had uttered no word of warning against the military measures taken by Russia, whereas Herr von Bethmann by his instruction to Tschirschky of July 29th had most plainly intimated his will for peace.

This is the slender account of the historical antecedents of the war from which the new leader of Germany draws the ample conclusion that Germany had sought for peace, but that the Entente Powers had striven for war.



It is not worth while to devote many words to this hasty and cavalier treatment of the question of guilt, which falls far short of the similar achievements of Herr von Bethmann. What I have documentarily proved on strictly scientific methods in more than a thousand pages in *J'accuse* and *The Crime*, Germany's and Austria's exclusive responsibility for this war, cannot be disposed of by two or three sentences of the new Minister any more than by the long-winded, apologetic speeches of his predecessor. It appears to me superfluous to give further private lessons in the elements of the diplomatic antecedents of the war for the instruction of the political illiteracy of the former Commissioner of Food, and after having disposed of the old Chancellor, now to rebuke the new.

II. Proceeding from the thesis of the enemy attack, the new Chancellor, just like the old, arrives logically at the demand for future securities of the frontier.

When we make peace, the first thing that we must attain is that the frontiers of the German Empire should be made secure for all time, By way of understanding and adjustment we must guarantee the conditions of life of the German Empire on the Continent and beyond the sea.

What the new Chancellor understands by making the frontiers secure is expressed, more distinctly than in the speech of July 19th, in an address which Herr Dr. Michaelis delivered on August 4th, 1917, on the occasion of an official celebration in commemoration of the war, which took place in the building of the Reichstag :

To-day we all know what we want. We want to transmit unimpaired to coming generations the inheritance entrusted to us by our fathers. We want to protect our children and children's children from the distresses of war, such as we have experienced, falling upon them. We mean to circumdefend our Fatherland by a strong and wise peace, so that German character may keep for all time a more sure foundation for healthy and strong development.

These words of the Chancellor say in a manner that is not to be misunderstood that Germany seeks to attain her future security by military and territorial means. The Fatherland is to be "circumdefended." This is a neologism of the new Chancellor specially coined for this occasion,



and can only be understood in the sense of military and strategic security. The reference to the strong development of the German character for all time also savours strongly of expansion and recalls most suspiciously the Pan-German catchword about the German "character," which will one day heal the world. In short, Pan-Germany may be even more satisfied with this second announcement of the new Chancellor than with the first. In Herr Michaelis's phrases as to security all the annexationist demands of Herr von Bethmann, to the right and the left, to the east and the west, can be conveniently fitted in. This method of securing the frontier is indeed placed by the new Minister in the forefront of the peace conditions. It is true that the Chancellor adds that the way by which the conditions of life of the German Empire are to be guaranteed by land and by sea is to be the way of understanding and adjustment with the enemy Powers. This is in agreement with the preceding sentence in the Chancellor's speech, according to which Germany does not intend "to increase her power by resort to violence" and would not carry on the war a day further merely "to make conquests by violence."

All these intentionally obscure and nebulous phrases are obviously designed to satisfy everyone, those on the Right as well as the Left: *tout le monde et encore sa belle-mère*. To those on the right the security of the frontier for all times is thrown as a bait; to those on the left the path of understanding, the refusal of the path of violence. If, however, the attempt to arrive at an understanding is unsuccessful, as is already absolutely certain—what then? If the enemies of Germany, in addition to other justified demands, require the complete evacuation of the occupied territories, if they flatly refuse any so-called security of the frontiers in favour of the aggressor—what then? Then in fact—only thus can the double-tongued speech of the Chancellor be interpreted—the way of understanding which Germany has proposed will have become impassable, then there will remain nothing but the path of violence which the German Government no doubt repudiates in principle, but which they will be forced to follow in order to attain the peace aim that is primarily being sought, the



permanent security of Germany's frontiers. Thus the new Chancellor arrives by a circuitous path exactly at the policy in the matter of war-aims which his predecessor pursued from the beginning of the war until his resignation : We need security of the frontier towards the East and the West ; if this is conceded to us by way of understanding, so much the better ; but if it is not, then the responsibility rests on our enemies, if we are forced to continue in the former path of violence.

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The preceding interpretation of the two first speeches of the Chancellor, which I committed to paper shortly after they were delivered, have shown themselves in the sequel to be absolutely to the point. The majority of the German Reichstag, consisting of the Centre, the Majority Socialists, the progressive " Volkspartei " and some members of other parties, passed a resolution on July 19th which, even if in a very vague and indefinite form, expressed itself against " compulsory acquisition of territory," against " political, economic or financial acts of violation " and in favour of the " creation of international organisations resting on law." The resolution of the parties belonging to the majority merited in itself a very limited measure of confidence for two reasons, first because it again proceeded from the false premise—which must therefore lead to false conclusions—that Germany had " only seized arms in defence of her freedom and independence, and for the inviolability of her territorial possessions," and secondly, and above all, because up till then the parties voting in its favour had all, in greater or less degree, proclaimed annexationist aims, or, at any rate, as in the case of the Social Patriots, had bestowed on them their sanction by the approval given to the war credits. The sudden conversion of all these politicians of violence into politicians of understanding could not but appear in the highest degree suspicious, and was bound to occasion apprehension lest this sudden conversion to the left might be followed by an equally sudden reversion to the right—as soon as the military and economic position of Germany would permit this new change.



The enforced abandonment of the former policy of violence, the enforced conversion and repentance on the part of the German members of the Reichstag represented merely a very restricted step forward, which was, however, completely robbed of any value by virtue of the fact that there was no corresponding development of the same nature on the side of the Government. Exactly as in the case of all the similar statements of Herr von Bethmann, the Chancellor's statement of July 19th in its tortuous and ambiguous form had given occasion to entirely contradictory interpretations, had provided the annexationists as well as the non-annexationists with the possibility of claiming the new statesman as their ally; it had left open to the Government all possible ways of escape with the object of adapting their later peace conditions as they might consider expedient, and as might be suggested by the course of the military operations. The suspicion that the new Chancellor, at the bottom of his heart, was more annexationist than anti-annexationist was then strengthened by the copious supply of telegrams sent by Colonel—I beg his pardon, the Chancellor—Michaelis to Pan-German Unions and gatherings, as well as by his memorial speech on August 4th. By the utterances of the leading statesman on August 22nd this suspicion became a certainty.

On that date (according to the report of the *Berliner Tageblatt* of August 23rd) Herr Dr. Michaelis stated before the Main Committee of the Reichstag: "He had never said that he stood on the ground of the peace resolution of the Reichstag majority; even within the parties constituting the majority shades of opinion had, he believed, been manifested." On this occasion Herr Dr. Michaelis again maintained his suspicious jesuitical *reservatio mentalis* of July 19th (Protestant Jesuits are well-known to be the worst) that his peace aims "could be attained within the terms of the majority resolution *as he understood it*." In spite of all the manœuvres which followed on the part of the official Wolff Bureau with the object of hushing matters up, it is thus made clear that the new Chancellor, who holds office by the grace of the Crown Prince and of Hindenburg (as indeed was only to be expected from the outset), does *not* stand on the ground of the resolution of the



Reichstag in favour of an understanding, which was in itself ambiguous and undeserving of confidence, that his war-aim, like that of his predecessor, is *not* to establish the security of all States by a pacifist organisation, but that it is the one-sided strategic security of Germany's power, in other words the continuance of the former system or lack of system, of the former international anarchy.

The determination of this fact cannot surprise those of us who are "knowing Thebans"; we knew and know what is to be expected from Prussian Germany. The fact should, however, be important and rich in its consequences for certain "illusionists," resident within and beyond the German frontiers. For them the present disappointment ought to be the remedy to cure them once for all from the mistaken belief that the idea of a just, reasonable, enduring condition of peace organised on a basis of law can be made accessible otherwise than by force to those who hold power in Germany.

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The test by reference to example can be at once applied if the discussion is diverted from the general theses to the special war-aims in which Germany is concerned. Instead of putting forward the well-sounding assurance that Germany will not continue the war a day longer for the sake of making conquests by violence, it would have been more to the point, and more convincing to everyone, if Herr Michaelis had delivered himself clearly on the following questions :

What is to become of Belgium ?    What is to become  
of the Russian Baltic Provinces ?    What is to become  
of Poland ?

I believe that I have convincingly proved by reference to the facts already in existence that the intention is that Belgium and the Russian Baltic Provinces should be violated by Prussian Germany to a greater or less degree, and that they certainly will be so violated in so far as the course of the war enables this to be done. If in Berlin they are now prepared to withdraw their statements on this subject and to cancel the preparations which have already been



made, then they must say so in unmistakable words. Since, however, they do not say so, but on the contrary continue to proclaim that their most important peace-aim is the "security of the German frontiers for all time," it is thereby proved that the previous annexationist intentions with regard to Belgium and the Russian Baltic Provinces are still being maintained without modification. With reference to Belgium, the new Chancellor has already spoken plainly enough in the second month of his Chancellorship. On August 30th, 1917, the Wolff Bureau published the following telegram :

The Chancellor received in Brussels a deputation from the Council of Flanders which welcomed him in a lengthy address. The Chancellor in his reply referred to the statements which his predecessor in office had made to the Council of Flanders on its visit to Berlin on March 3rd, 1917, and stated that since then no change had taken place in the attitude of the Government.

In an earlier passage I have reproduced and appraised Bethmann's statements of March 3rd to which Herr Dr. Michaelis here refers. By his express concurrence in these annexationist statements of his predecessor, the new Chancellor makes it unmistakably clear how he "understands" the peace by understanding of the majority in the Reichstag.

So far as the Russian Baltic Provinces are concerned, the Reichstag majority itself, six weeks after their resolution of July 19th, gave an authentic interpretation of their resolution in favour of an understanding, which relieves the Government of the necessity of bringing forward any explanations as to how they "understand" it. Messrs. Erzberger, Scheidemann, Stresemann and Co. did so much for Dr. Michaelis that "there was almost nothing left for him to do." On August 28th, 1917, the members of the National Liberal, the Progressive, the Social Democratic and the Centre Parties in the Main Committee of the Reichstag unanimously accepted a proposal, the effect of which was that for Lithuania and Courland "steps should be taken towards the election of representatives of the population who are supported by the confidence of all parties among the people, and that, so far as military



circumstances permit, civil administration should be created." This resolution only acquires its proper significance when it is regarded in connection with the declarations and the actions of Bethmann's Government and of the parties supporting it, which are emphasised in an earlier passage. The *Berliner Tageblatt*, a paper known to be by no means annexationist in sentiment, calls this resolution of the Main Committee a "great step forward on the path to the emancipation of our Eastern neighbours"; it speaks of the "liberation from the Muscovite yoke"; of the "national freedom of movement," by which the inhabitants of these territories will "merely be more firmly knit to the German people"; of the "moral conquests" which will bring home to these "thinly populated countries which are culturally in need of German care" how much "they will for a long time to come be thrown back on German support just by virtue of their emancipation" (see the *Berliner Tageblatt*, morning edition, of August 29th, 1917).

Expressed in plain language, this oleaginous, sugary concoction merely means that Lithuania and Courland are to be added to the German Empire and that the preparations for this purpose have already been taken, exactly as in the case of Belgium. And this resolution was passed by those very parties in the Reichstag who a few weeks previously had protested so energetically against any "acquisitions of territory by violence."<sup>1</sup>

In even stronger contradiction to the resolutions and the speeches of July 19th is the treatment accorded to the Poles in the former Congress Poland. In this case the forceful disposal of a whole people, without any regard to its own will and the right of self-determination of this people, has already passed beyond the stage of preparations and has become a fact. The happiness compulsorily conferred upon them in the shape of the Prusso-Austro-Polish Kingdom is, as is proved afresh every

<sup>1</sup> The later jubilation in the whole of the civil and "Right" Social Democratic Press occasioned by the "liberation" of Riga, the "old German Hanseatic town," affords complete confirmation of the fact that the majority resolution of July 19th, 1917, is merely a further enrichment of the German collection of scraps of paper which is already so extensive.



day, absolutely opposed to the will of the Polish people. No attempt has even been made to ascertain what this will is by obtaining the evidence of a plebiscite. I have already spoken elsewhere of the details of this violent elevation of Poland into a kingdom. The discord between the so-called Polish National Government and the Austro-Prussian Governor-General, the closing of the Polish University, the refusal of the Polish legionaries to take the oath of brotherhood in arms with the armies of the Central Powers as prescribed by the conquerors, the wholesale arrests of leading personalities, the resolutions passed by the various Polish Committees, even in Austria, in which the new kingdom, deprived of political and territorial significance, was refused, and a really united and independent kingdom was demanded in its place—all these occurrences, becoming daily more acute, confirm what everyone acquainted with the circumstances knew from the beginning: namely, that the rule of Prussia and Austria in Poland, even under the specious form of a new kingdom, is merely a brutal domination of conquest and violence.<sup>1</sup> In view of this fact, it would not be out of place to ask the new Chancellor and his majority this question: "What think you, Gentlemen, of Poland? If your repudiation of any domination resting on violence is sincerely intended, why do you not concede to the inhabitants of occupied Poland the right—by a plebiscite surrounded by every guarantee—to arrive at an independent decision regarding their fate?" So long as this direct and practical conclusion is not drawn from the anti-violence confession which sounds so beautiful, we are justified in regarding this confession as sounding brass and as a tinkling cymbal, as a further chapter in the German Book of Fairy Tales which has already swollen to so many volumes.

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It is a noteworthy accident that the untrustworthiness of the Chancellor's statements of July 19th are confirmed

<sup>1</sup> The September Patents (1917) on the question of the institution by the occupying Powers of a Council of Regency and a Council of State, without consulting the Polish people and without their co-operation, will in no way modify the former position.



by two official publications which exactly coincide with the date of the Chancellor's speech. On the afternoon of Thursday, July 19th, Herr Dr. Michaelis, in his speech in the Reichstag outlining his programme, repudiated any conquest resting on violence. On Thursday evening the Berlin newspapers published an official communication, according to which the administrative division in the Government of Belgium—between Flanders (with Brussels as capital) and "Wallonien" (with Namur as capital)—had now been completely carried out and for each of these administrative areas a special chief with comprehensive powers had been appointed.

This, of course, is by no means an acquisition of territory by violence, but merely the execution of the expressed will of the Flemings, who could not wait patiently the hour when they would come under German rule. That is "liberation," but not conquest! That is the familiar song to which we have now been listening for three years.

To this preparation for annexation towards the West there is a corresponding similar preparation towards the East. Here again we have the accidental, and for this reason all the more interesting, coincidence of the action with the contradictory statement of the leading statesman. On July 20th, that is to say the day following the Chancellor's speech, Wolff's Bureau circulated an article of the *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* on the Lithuanian Congress in Petrograd in which "the desire for a separation of Lithuania from Russia was expressed as the chief characteristic feature." On this the semi-official organ of the Government observes :

The German Government has shown the utmost goodwill and conciliatoriness towards these justifiable desires of Lithuania, which are in the interests of Lithuania as well as of Germany. The Foreign Secretary received the deputation of Lithuanians and gave expression to the view that the German Government entertained the utmost benevolence towards the Lithuanian population, and that on the conclusion of peace they would show themselves ready to meet fully their desire for a far-reaching system of self-government. . . . A confidential council, drawn from the representatives of the population, was working hand in hand with the German administration



for the well-being of the Lithuanians. Any practical co-operation of the Lithuanians in the great work of securing the cultural and political independence of the country was welcome in Germany. It must, however, be practical work, based on the realities of the present war and the political conditions produced by it.

This model of double-tongued hypocrisy calls for no commentary, especially as it entirely agrees with the intentions of the German rulers on the Russian Baltic Provinces already illustrated elsewhere in my work. The "Confidential Council" of the Lithuanian population is the exact counterpart of the Flemish Confidential Council. The "benevolence" felt towards the desire of the Lithuanian population for self-government exactly corresponds to the benevolence towards the same desires on the part of the Flemings. It is the benevolence felt towards the sheep by the fox who craftily exclaims to his victims: "Fear nothing from me: I have no evil intentions against you: I am only going to devour you; but you will see that you will feel much more comfortable in my stomach than you do now in the sheep-pen of your master."

These two publications of the German Government immediately after the Chancellor's protestation that no manner of violence was intended are the best illustrations of the German peace of "understanding."

III. The resolution of the parties constituting the majority in the Reichstag contains the following two sentences on the question of the future peace configuration of Europe:

The Reichstag strives for a peace based on an understanding and a permanent reconciliation among the nations. . . .

The Reichstag will energetically promote the creation of international organisations resting on law.

These two sentences, taken by themselves, describe in an extremely vague and colourless form the most important peace-aim of the Entente Powers, the creation of a "Société des Nations," yet of this very cautious and timorous acknowledgment by the Reichstag majority of the pacifist aims of the enemy Powers, and primarily of America, the Chancellor omits the second sentence, and contents himself with expressing concurrence in the first empty and meaning-



less formula, that is to say, with concurring in a peace "which will be the basis of a permanent reconciliation among the nations."

The statement of the Chancellor runs :

Peace must furnish the basis of a permanent reconciliation among the nations. It must prevent the further creation of enmity between the nations as a result of economic isolation. It must secure us against the possibility that the alliance in arms of our enemies may grow into an offensive league against us.

To this extent the pacifism, so solemnly proclaimed by Bethmann on November 9th, 1916, has faded, evaporated and dissolved into nothing. A "permanent reconciliation among the nations"—that is all that the new man in Germany expects from the conclusion of peace. But all this is nothing in comparison to what *we* expect, what we demand, what the whole world requires, what the enemies of Germany have put forward in the forefront of their peace programme as the most important point. The new Chancellor has not a word to say about the organisation of States on a basis of law, about the settlement of all disputes by arbitration, about the unconditional elimination of war, about the nations' right of self-determination, about the establishment of a restraining force above the individual States, about a proportionate reduction of armaments. The bare "reconciliation of the nations" says nothing. Every conclusion of peace in the past has endeavoured to effect such a reconciliation, but none has ever attained it. "I could cite a thousand more recent examples," says Machiavelli in *The Prince*, "to show how many conclusions of peace, assurances and treaties have been made null and void by princes breaking their word, whereby, however, those who knew most skilfully how to play the part of the fox have always come off best." The dangers of a too confiding conclusion of peace which are here indicated threaten doubly and trebly a compact which is concluded without enforceable guarantees of law with a Prince who is accustomed to treat his promises and his signature according to another maxim of the equally ingenious and non-moral Florentine : "A prudent prince ought never to keep his promise when it is injurious to him, or when the conditions under which it was given have altered." No, these



unscrupulous violators of Belgian neutrality, these unfeeling destroyers and devastators of countries basely attacked, these thousand-fold murderers of innocent men, women and children whose sole crime was that they belonged to States which the robbers had selected as their booty, the Hohenzollerns and their most recent herald of peace do not inspire any belief in the world by their dulcet *chamades* of reconciliation. "He who has once lied is not believed, even when he tells the truth."

What had already been recognised by all progressive spirits before this war as the only trustworthy guarantee of peace—the organisation of the community of nations on a basis of law—will, after the war, be more than ever the panacea for all the sufferings of humanity, maimed and bleeding from a thousand wounds. Not merely was this truth recognised long ago by Germany's enemies, but on November 9th, 1916, it was also proclaimed *urbi et orbi* by the predecessor of the present Chancellor in bombastic phrases calculated to deceive naïve hearers—although no doubt it was soon to fade away and be extinguished, finally disappearing for ever in the Orcus of Prussian militarism.

The Chancellor, as is proved by his carefully guarded and balanced programme of reconciliation, has no intention of recalling to life the short-lived German "pacifism," the ephemeral insect of Bethmann's late summer season. He still believes firmly in the vital energy of the old system, which for men of insight has been long dead. His "reconciliation of the nations" is removed by a whole world from the train of thought which can alone lead to an enduring, that is to say, to an organised peace.

In the case of the new Chancellor, as so often in that of his predecessor, what he does not say is almost more important than what he does say. The fact that he ignores the most important question of the future—the creation of an international organisation of law with the object of obtaining a real guarantee of a future enduring peace with the logical consequence of a proportionate reduction of all armaments—the fact that he omits this most salient point in any discussion about peace proves once again to anyone who



has eyes to see, that Germany will never voluntarily submit to a pacifist organisation based on law and compulsion, with all its implications, and that she will become pacifist only when she is no longer able to remain militaristic.

In this point the change in the Chancellorship has only served to worsen the prospect of a speedy establishment of a platform for peace negotiations. Small as might be the degree of confidence felt by any well-informed person towards Herr von Bethmann's pacifist confession, the fact remains that he had made such a confession and the German people and the enemies of Germany alike were at any time in a position to remind him of this confession and pin him to his words. The new Chancellor has *not* made such a confession; on the contrary, he has intentionally avoided the opportunity, given by the resolution of the majority, of expressing himself in the sense of the pacifist programme of his enemies and also of his predecessor. The fact that he ignored it amounts to a refusal. *Vestigia terrent*. The fate of Bethmann the "Pacifist," who merely donned his pacifist garments once on a festal day and then forthwith exchanged them for a general's uniform, has clearly taught his successor that in Prussian Germany it is better and more consistent not to attire oneself in the clothes and the ornaments of a man of the world which after all will have to be doffed within a brief space of time. Thus in place of Bethmann the Confessor we have got Michaelis the Confessionless, and we are left disconsolate, seeing our hopes for the future, which have never begun to materialise, vanish for ever from our sight.

Taking all things together, it is possible in judging the new Chancellor to concur for once, by way of exception, in a sentence of Scheidemann: "Germany has bad luck." It has exchanged a Chancellor who recognised the signs of the times but did not possess the energy to act accordingly, for a Chancellor who, while he may perhaps possess the necessary energy for action, fails to recognise the signs of the times.



PACIFISM "AS HE UNDERSTANDS IT."<sup>1</sup>

The preceding section, "Bethmann and Michaelis," was already in print when the German Government answered the Pope's peace note on September 19th, 1917. Since this answer was obviously designed to fill the gaps which the former statements of the new Chancellor had left in regard to pacifist problems, I consider it expedient, in order to avoid the charge of one-sided representation, to discuss in a few words this German answer and above all to investigate this question: Is there in fact and in truth in this last announcement of the German Government an advance in the sense of a recognition of pacifism? Is it honestly and sincerely intended? Or is it the case that here again it is merely the German will to power and will to victory that is recognisable, for once by way of a change in a pacifist disguise?

We have already had experience of one Chancellor as a pacifist confessor. His confession was dissipated as speedily as it had come into existence. I have elsewhere explained that it was in itself rotten, worthy of no confidence, and belied by the earlier and later action of the confessor. What is the position with regard to the present confession? Is it more credible than the previous one? Is it more consistent than that was with the actions of the confessor? That is the question which I shall here briefly investigate.

The new Chancellor also concurs in the view that "in the future the material power of arms must be superseded by the moral power of right"; he also is prepared for "definite rules and certain safeguards for the simultaneous and reciprocal limitation of armaments on land and sea and in the air"; he also is willing to decide "international differences of opinion not by the use of armed force but by peaceful methods, especially by arbitration."

But all these concurring statements are forthwith deprived of all value by the clause which is added, disclosing the cloven hoof, that "the Imperial Government

<sup>1</sup> This addition, written at the end of September, 1917, is the last which I can add before the printing of my book is completed. All later events must remain unconsidered and must be reserved for possible separate treatment.



will support every proposal which is compatible with the vital interests of the German Empire and people." This restrictive clause is sufficiently familiar to us from the Hague negotiations. We know that the struggle of opinion at The Hague turned round this very clause, which in any given case opened to a State bent on war the possibility of describing any dispute as "affecting its vital interests," and in this way of eluding such decision by arbitration as might be prescribed by international agreement. By this suspicious addition and generally by the frigid reserved tone of its assent, the announcement of the new Chancellor is disadvantageously distinguished from that of his predecessor in November, 1916. The criticism which I have passed on Bethmann the "Pacifist" is therefore applicable in increased measure to Michaelis the "Pacifist." The recent conversion of the German potentates to ideas which they most bitterly opposed in word and deed for twenty years, which in the critical days before the war they partly rejected and partly ignored, by the refusal of which they frustrated any amicable settlement of the conflict—such a sudden conversion will not appear to anyone to be worthy of confidence, even if it had manifested itself without reservations and stipulations.

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The possibility is by no means excluded—and certainly it is to be eagerly desired—that this conversion may progress still further, that the course of military events in conjunction with economic pressure may gradually produce a real evolution, without any angularities, in the leading circles of Germany—an evolution in the direction of an enduring peace based on law, without annexations and without violence, on the basis of the nations' right of self-determination. This evolution, resulting from external pressure, will take place all the more quickly, the more it is supported by Revolution, that is to say, by internal pressure.

Whatever the future may bring in the way of further development in this direction, will not render invalid a single sentence, a single word of what I have written regarding the present or the past. On the contrary! Should



there one day really be an honourable and sincere conversion and repentance in the potentates of Germany, this will merely prove that those of us who bitterly criticised the former attitude of our rulers were on the right path. The success of our criticism will furnish the confirmation of its justice.

This holds for the future. The settlement for the past will take place according to a special separate account, which the German people will present to its Rulers and Governments, and it is to be hoped that they will behave as inexorable creditors in exacting the debit balance. The recognition to-day of the principle that Right takes precedence of Might—even if it were sincere in its intention—does not relieve the authorities in Germany from the heavy responsibility which they have assumed by denying this principle for so many years. The present-day pacifism of extremity cannot undo the extremity of pacifism which has for generations hindered in Germany those thoughts as to the future which can alone bring healing. The repentant sinner of to-day—even if he should repent sincerely (which I doubt)—confesses himself as the hardened criminal of yesterday. The to-day is to be thankfully accepted, the yesterday is to be ruthlessly branded, punished and expiated.

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But we have not yet got so far as that. For the present we are still stuck with both feet in the yesterday. In the German answer to the Pope we see merely a far-off glimmer of better days, which are still veiled by heavy masses of clouds—we see merely groping steps towards a goal which they have not of their own free will set before them, but which has merely been hung out at the gate of the Peace Palace under compulsion, as a bait and as a signboard to invite the passers-by to enter. To-day they acknowledge with their lips the Papal peace programme, but in all their inherited and acquired thoughts and feelings their hearts are whole worlds removed. I believe that as a German and a Prussian I am a true interpreter of the thoughts and feelings of our rulers and ruling classes, and I adhere to what I have already said elsewhere: In spite of all fair



words regarding Right and Might, regarding limitation of armaments, decision of international disputes by arbitration, etc.—in spite of all these sweet, savoury phrases, no Hohenzollern, no Prussian of the old style, no man in the civil and military circles which direct the fate of Prussian Germany, believes in the healing power of pacifist therapeutics; none of these leading men, the Emperor at their head, desires earnestly and sincerely to subject Germany's "sovereign" freedom of action or her military power by land or by sea to any international control or restriction.

This has been the case until to-day, pending later instruction by the power of facts. While the Imperial Government is expressing to the Pope its readiness to lend its support to an organisation of the community of nations based on law with compulsory limitation of armaments, a German Fatherland Party is at the very same moment founded in Germany under the leadership of princes and august gentlemen, with the open and the secret encouragement of the body of generals and the whole official hierarchy, and this body inscribes on its banner the "Hindenburg peace," that is to say, the peace of German power, and assigns to the Papal peace of law the Cinderella rôle which such Utopias have always played in Prussia.

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This contrast between the words of the Government and the thoughts and actions of the leading circles of Germany need occasion no surprise. When all is said, the German answer itself, when it is more closely examined under the magnifying glass, reveals the same suspicious contrast; in this document itself, under the flowery covering of world peace, there lurks the poisonous snake of the German peace—the peace "which Germany needs in order to stand secure to all time," by which "air and light will be given to the German oak for its free development." These are the words of Hindenburg in a letter of thanks to the German people a few weeks after the answer of the German Government to the Papal Note. It is only in appearance that this answer stands on pacifist ground; in reality, when accurately viewed, it is permeated



through and through by the militaristic spirit ; it is the spirit of Hindenburg which moves on the surface of the German waters.

The German answer suffers from one defect, which robs its pacifist confessions of any value and also shows the document, like so many other of Germany's announcements, to be merely a scrap of paper. This defect lies in the silence which is observed with regard to the immediate practical war-aims of Germany, and in the avoidance of any statement on the question of annexations. The Pope also had put forward as the " fundamental point " in his peace programme the replacement of the material force of arms by the moral force of right together with simultaneous and reciprocal diminution of armaments. He had, however, added :

But these pacific agreements, with the immense advantages they entail, are impossible without the reciprocal restitution of territories now occupied. Consequently on the part of Germany there must be the complete evacuation of Belgium, with a guarantee of her full political, military and economic independence towards all Powers whatsoever ; likewise the evacuation of French territory. On the part of the other belligerent parties, there must be a similar restitution of the German colonies.

What does this mean ? It means that Right can only be created on the basis of Right, not on the basis of what is unright. He who is prepared to concede to right the power to decide disputes between the nations in future, must first of all establish in the present a state of affairs corresponding to right, and must above all undo the wrong committed by himself. He who purposes erecting the future structure of law on the basis of the present acts of violence has built on sand. In the future there will no longer be any truth in that saying of the Emperor, which once on a time William II wrote in somebody's album in a spirit of youthful exuberance :

He who on God has planned,  
Keeping his sword in hand,—  
He has not built on sand.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Wer nur auf Gott vertraut  
Und feste um sich haut  
Hat nicht auf Sand gebaut.]



There must now be an end of "keeping the sword in hand." It is not the sword but the trowel that is the important thing in future, and he who wishes to build must first of all see that there is a solid foundation.

An acknowledgment of pacifism which says : "In future the material power of arms must give way to the moral force of right," but which simultaneously states : "For the present I propose to retain possession of all that my arms have conquered, Belgium, Poland, Lithuania, Courland, Livonia," such an acknowledgment is of no value and on this document also, as on all the previous peace manifestoes of the German Government, we are justified in inscribing the motto : *Pacifismus vacat*. This is all the more the case since the mere failure to mention all these objects of conquest in the answer to the Pope is emphatically underlined by the express refusal to make any statement which is contained in the speech delivered by the Chancellor, Dr. Michaelis, on September 28th. Herr Dr. Michaelis made use of the following words in the Main Committee of the Reichstag :

I must make clear the standpoint of those who control the Empire, a standpoint from which we will not allow ourselves to be moved, and that is that for the present I must refuse to define our war-aims and to tie the hands of our negotiators.

Both the Chancellor and his Foreign Secretary, Dr. von Kühlmann, declined in particular to make any statement regarding Belgium, although the re-establishment of the complete economic, political and military independence of this country had been placed at the head of the Papal peace conditions. The violation of Belgian neutrality had been described by the former Chancellor himself (in his speech of August 4th, 1914) as a "wrong" which would be made good later on. In Herr von Jagow's note to Prince Lichnowsky of August 4th, 1914 (Blue Book, No. 157), the re-establishment of Belgium had been promised in any contingency, even in the event of Belgium opposing the Germans by arms : under no pretence whatever would Germany annex Belgian territory—so ran the solemn assurance then given to the English Government by the German Secretary of State.

And to-day there is not a word about the restoration of



Belgium! "Those responsible for the conduct of the Empire's affairs preserve a free hand for possible peace negotiations. This holds also for Belgium." This is the only mention of the Belgian question which passed the lips of the leading German statesman. A free hand for peace negotiations regarding Belgium! No, Herr Dr. Michaelis, your hands are *not* free in this matter. You are bound by Right and Morality, and by your predecessor's own promises. Any attempt to build a future structure of peace on the insecure ground of German violence against Belgium is from the outset doomed to failure.

It would certainly be a convenient course for the German potentates as the *beati possidentes* to create for the future an international organisation of law with mutual restriction of armaments, but for the present to continue the existence of the state of violence established by their momentary conquests. Suppose I break into someone else's property, that I plunder, murder and burn, and having obtained firm possession of his belongings that I hypocritically exclaim to the man who has been plundered and robbed: "Might must in future give way to Right." The injured man who has hitherto been the under-dog retorts: "Very well, give way, then. Give me back my belongings, compensate me, and then we will talk about the future." The despoiler, however, frigidly replies: "Give way? Now? We will talk about that *later*. Let us in the first place take counsel regarding the future." Is it conceivable that the party who has been outraged and robbed could concur in such a proposal, or could even give it serious consideration? Let us suppose that Napoleon I, after Austerlitz and Jena, after the defeat of Prussia, Austria, Russia and Italy, after he had become the ruler of the European continent, had suddenly appeared with proposals for world-wide arbitration and for mutual disarmament. What would have been the reply of the oppressed nations and of the dispossessed princes? The robber who keeps his booty in his hand and proposes to the man who has been robbed that there shall be for the future an organisation of law and a process of disarmament, in effect merely says: What I have gained by robbery and violence is now to be protected by a legal bond. The state of violence created by me is to be trans-



formed into a state of law, and is thus to be legalised. Wrong is to be converted into right, right into wrong. The attempt to wrench from me once again the proceeds of my robbery is to be prevented by the exclusion of self-help and by mutual limitation of armaments. The community of nations is to guarantee me that which my own power cannot guarantee.

That is the true meaning of Germany's most recent peace message. It need occasion no surprise that while the enemies of Germany may hear this message, they refuse to display any faith in it—that they are not disposed to recognise Force, which it is proposed should for the future be the executive organ of right, as being in respect of the past the law-giver, the legislator of right. The society of nations can be based only on a state of right, not on a state of unright. Its basis must be the re-establishment of right, that is to say, the restoration of what has been wrongfully acquired, the making good of the injuries that have been inflicted.

It is therefore entirely in accordance with logic and reason that the enemies of Germany should put forward their demands in the following progression: Restitution, Reparation, Guarantees for the future. It is, however, entirely opposed to logic and reason that Germany should choose the reverse sequence, that it should place guarantees for the future in the forefront of its most recent peace programme, but should leave entirely aside the necessary precursors and presuppositions of a peace ordered on law, namely, restitution and reparation. The very least that the aggressor and the conqueror would be bound to offer as a presupposition of a future organisation of law and limitation of armaments would be the *status quo ante bellum*. Even this minimum would not be sufficient, since to restitution there must be added reparation, and since, apart from an organisation of law, other protective measures might also be found necessary as a guarantee for the future against specially dangerous and incorrigible disturbers of the peace (a point on which I have already expressed my opinions elsewhere). Where, however, the aggressor and the conqueror does not even offer this minimum, the *status quo ante bellum*, where he keeps



open for himself the possibility of maintaining wholly or partially the *status quo post bellum*, that is to say, the state of force created as a result of his conquests, then the possibility of any discussion is completely excluded—then we are confronted not with an earnest offer of peace, not with a sincere concurrence in a pacifist organisation of the nations, but merely with a specious offer, a specious concurrence which, with the help of well-sounding phrases about humanity, seeks to veil the will to pursue the war until the satisfaction of their need of power is attained.

The retention of the conquered territories in greater or less extent, in conjunction with the acknowledgment of a pacifist organisation of law, means that the one who is gluttoned wants to shut up the larder in order that the others may not be able to satisfy their hunger, and as he does not feel that he is by himself strong enough to shut it, he calls on the others, his former enemies, to come to his assistance and invites them by common efforts and guarantees to shut it in such a way that it will remain closed once for all.

Germany's enemies will not comply with this friendly invitation, and they are right in so acting. They will first of all consider how to provide the appropriate emetic to the gluttoned German potentates and make them give up what they have devoured. Only then, *after* this has happened, will they seek to close the European larder to all alike.

\* \* \* \* \*

In these circumstances I can only convey to Herr Dr. Michaelis, the new Chancellor, the following well intended warning on his thorny path of peace, if by any chance he means to follow it in sincerity :

If you want to be pacifist, your Excellency, then be so whole-heartedly. Your half-pacifism, your pacifism for the future, taken in conjunction with your anti-pacifism in the past, is worse than no pacifism at all—it is the *pax vobiscum* of these false prophets who appear with gestures of benediction in sheep's clothing, making the sign of the Cross, but are inwardly ravening wolves. As roses do not spring from thistles, so Right



will never grow out of Wrong. "He who sows the wind will reap the whirlwind," says the prophet Hosea.

It is another grain of seed that you should plant in the ground: the acknowledgment of the German guilt of the war, the promise to undo all the consequences of the misdeed, to expiate and atone for all the wrong—lay that seed into the earth, and you will see that the palm of world-peace will spring therefrom, casting its shadows far and wide and firmly rooted in the soil, so that all the peoples of the earth will in future be able to dwell peacefully under its branches.

From the seed of *your* pacifism, on the other hand—pacifism "as you understand it"—it is not the palm of peace of an organised community of the nations that will arise, but only the prickly holly tree of new friction, new discords, new catastrophes.

#### CONCLUSION.

We have seen the attitude adopted by the potentates of Germany towards the problems of future peace, above all to the problem which is most important, that of the organisation of the nations for the prevention of future wars. Their attitude towards this question, which is of decisive importance for the future fate of the whole world, is a worthy counterpart to the attitude which they assumed in the summer of 1914 towards the question of the maintenance of peace at that time.

The same ambiguities and signs of indecision, the same promises and refusals, the same apparent acceptance followed by non-acceptance of the propositions put forward by the other side, the same method of placing now this, now that subject of negotiation in the foreground, in order that they might all the better attain their unconfessed purposes behind the screen—all the circumstances which then made the maintenance of peace impossible will now make a satisfying and enduring conclusion of peace impossible, if Germany retains her freedom to continue her former procedure.



Confronted with this uncertain and ambiguous attitude of Germany in a question which is the vital question of the future for all the peoples concerned, including the German people also, there can, in my opinion, be no compounding, no compromising, no drawing back. The first and most important paragraph of the treaty of peace which is to bring to an end this war, and with it the period of wars, is the foundation of a community of nations ordered on a basis of law for the prevention of future wars, with adequate coercive force and a corresponding limitation of all the individual armaments. This community of nations, however, will rest on a firm and secure basis only if it not merely prevents future wrongs, but also expiates and repairs present wrongs. He who wants the former only, but not the latter, must be regarded as the enemy of the future order of States, and must be fought against with every available weapon—diplomatic, economic, and military—until he has accepted the peace of law on the basis of law.

I say expressly : even with military weapons. The war must, in my opinion, be absolutely and unavoidably continued until Germany and her allies have accepted the highest and most important, indeed the only high and the only important postulate of peace, with all its presuppositions and consequences.

I say this as a Socialist and a Pacifist, even at the risk of being decried as a "Neverendian." I say this just because I am a Socialist and Pacifist. No peace is possible without a pacifist organisation. No pacifist organisation is possible without a re-establishment of the right that has been outraged, without an unconditional restitution of the property that has been robbed, without complete compensation of the injuries inflicted. *Mens sana in corpore sano*. It is only in a sound body politic that a new and better spirit can prosper. If the community of nations which is to exist in future bears from the outset the unhealthy germs of unexpiated wrong, of unavenged misdeeds, then there will be formed new centres of corruption which will speedily lead the scarcely born organism back once more to dissolution and decay. If this, the greatest of all wars, is really to be the last, then it will not be enough to create merely barriers and protective devices against *new* wars, but it



will also be necessary that all traces of this war should be obliterated ; the table of the past must be washed clean so that there may be room thereon for the iron law of the future.

That is and must be the true, the *highest*, aim of this war. This is the aim which requites every sacrifice that has been made and makes worth while the continuation of the struggle until it is attained.

But it is this aim alone that is worthy of such sacrifices. All other aims—whatever may be the value placed upon them—are of evanescent importance compared with this main object. The struggle is one which concerns the future of our planet, the introduction of a new period of human history, the happiness and well-being of all more remote generations. This is a fact which should be kept firmly in mind by the parties to the struggle, by all of them. This is a point of which they should never lose sight. This great “struggle for Right”—for the right of the past, the right of the future—would become a miserable dispute as to particular interests, it would be degraded to a base transaction if, for the sake of this or that special advantage, one were prepared to continue even for a day the enormous butchery, the insensate lavish expenditure of men and of wealth. That would be equivalent to prosecuting a lawsuit in which the costs would be in flagrant disproportion to the value of the object in dispute. No, deprive the robber of his booty ; compel him once again to repair the damage which he has occasioned, and above all bind for all time to come the man who is a common danger by placing upon him the strait-jacket of the law that judges him, the manacles of the force that overwhelms him. Bind him not only in your own interest, but in his also, just as the raving madman is imprisoned in a padded cell so that he may no longer be dangerous to himself and others.

Judge him, execute vengeance on him—if needs be, be his hangman !

But, be it observed, you are to be the administrator, not the violator—the executor, not the perverter of Law. More especially if your struggle is to be crowned with success, then avoid—for your honour and your advantage



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—abandoning the lofty *rôle* which fate has assigned you. Be on your guard against doing that with which you rightly reproach your opponents. Be on your guard against obscuring and degrading your world-historical mission by petty and selfish ends.

Let the sword of execution be sharp and keen, but the hands which wield it clean and unstained. Be inexorable and unwavering in the establishment of Right, but unselfish and incorruptible as regards your own wishes and passions.

Then History will one day be able to say of you :

Germany's conquerors gained a double victory, the victory over their enemies and the victory over themselves. They were strong in their righteousness ; they were righteous in their strength.



## EPILOGUE.

### QUO VADIS, GERMANIA?

Vous avez beau enterrer la vérité, elle chemine sous terre, elle repoussera un jour de partout, elle éclatera en végétations vengeresses. Et ce qui est pis encore, c'est que vous aidez à la démoralisation des petits, en obscurcissant chez eux le sentiment du juste. *Du moment qu'il n'y a pas de punis, il n'y a pas de coupables.*—Emile Zola, in his letter to President Loubet, December 22nd, 1900.

The evidence is concluded.

The accuser has submitted the incriminating material to the tribunal of the world and to the world-public.

He has moved for a pronouncement of guilt against the rulers and the leaders of the allied Empires.

The accused and their defenders have also been heard, as is fitting.

“Before God and history my conscience is clean.  
I did not want this war.”

In these words the Emperor William II, the party chiefly accused, solemnly protested his innocence a year after the outbreak of the catastrophe.

Now, history has passed judgment, and the heavenly judge also will give His sanction to this judgment. “If there were no Supreme Being to protect innocence and to punish crime, it would be necessary for man to invent it.” This saying of Robespierre, the Jacobin, will be verified with regard to the criminals of to-day, as it was in the case of the criminals of his time.

True, in the first stormy period of the war when it seemed as if success might even be vouchsafed to the misdeed,



as if the unrighteous might triumph and the just perish—then the faithful themselves might waver in their confidence in the justice of heaven—in that justice which has so often failed in history and has made success the justification of the basest crimes.

Merely devised, 'tis but a common crime.  
Achieved, 'tis an immortal enterprise.<sup>1</sup>

Then the “common crime” appeared to be on the point of being transformed into an “immortal enterprise.” And to-day—who could fail to recognise it?—to-day, despite all the deceptive and specious military successes, heavy storm-clouds hang low over the castles and the palaces of Germany—clouds which cannot be dispelled by “storm-attacks,” no matter how successful. To-day a thundery sultriness broods over “victorious” Germany. But to-morrow there will break forth the hurricane which will mercilessly sweep away castles and palaces. Already the lightning flashes and the vault of heaven trembles; already the Olympian stretches out his hand for his thunderbolts; soon, stroke on stroke the flaming signs of avenging justice will hiss thundering down on the heads of the guilty.

“There lives a God to punish and avenge!” With iron footsteps Nemesis approaches, the sword in the right hand, the scales of justice in the left, on her head the mailed helmet which no grenades can shiver. And when these arrogant ones, considering themselves super-men or half-gods, throw Pelion on Ossa, like the sons of Gaia, there still remains a might high above the mighty, who will hurl the Titans into Tartarus, who will crush under his feet the insubstantial structure of mortal men, who with a wave of his hand will lay level with the ground the Babel tower of unrestrained ambition.

Yes indeed, God and history, to whom Germany's Emperor appeals as his protectors and compurgators—they have uttered their decree of guilt.

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But there is still another sentence outstanding, the

<sup>1</sup> [Entworfen bloss ist's ein gemeiner Frevel  
Vollführt, ist's ein unsterblich Unternehmen.]



sentence of the judge who at the same time is in this case the party chiefly concerned, the chief sufferer, the chief executor of earthly justice—I refer to the sentence of the German people.

It is to the German people that I turn in order that it may recognise the truth, and act according to the truth.

“*Je n’aurais pu vivre*,” said the French senator Scheurer-Kestner twenty years ago when, risking his whole personality, his honour, his wealth, his external and internal peace, he took the first step towards bringing to light a miscarriage of justice committed against an innocent man.

“I could not have lived longer”—that was the thought which animated me when, a few months after the outbreak of the world-war, I was the first to come into the open with my arraignment against the rulers and the leaders of Germany and Austria.

The action has now been going on for nearly three years, almost as long a period as that during which the Dreyfus affair stirred the French Republic to its depths and made the world the eager and anxious spectator of great events. The question then at issue in France was not the crime of one powerful individual, of a ruler or a statesman; it was not that of a sanguinary world-catastrophe following as a consequence of that crime. The issue then was merely the guilt or the innocence of an insignificant private individual; the matter at stake related merely to an action which involved no consequences in the first place, and could at the most evoke dangers for the future. And yet! For three years the forces of good and of evil struggled with each other; the land was thrown from one dispeace into another, from one danger into another, until finally right conquered over wrong, truth over falsehood. Then it was a hygienic process that was achieved in France, a process that led to the extirpation of all the germs of disease, to the condemnation, the suicide, the outlawry of the guilty, to the rehabilitation of the innocent and his defenders, to the re-establishment of public morality.

What, however, is the position in Germany to-day? Can we say that here also truth is on the march? Or does it still remain closely confined under the earth, cut off from the sunshine and the light, buried under the rank growth



of lies and deception? The world eagerly awaits the development of events in Germany, the final judgment of the German people.

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But it is not alone the verdict of "guilty" that matters; what is even more important is the punishment which is to follow close on the heels of this finding. A verdict of guilty which did not impose on the greatest crime which has sullied the pages of human history the heaviest punishment which human justice can inflict, a merely platonic verdict of guilty would appear to the world as a mistaken judgment. It is not by means of territory or gold, least of all by means of small coin in the shape of specious "democratic" or "pacifist" concessions that such a gigantic blood-guiltiness can be paid. How could it? Millions and millions of dead and maimed—a chain of hapless men who, if placed in order, would cover the equatorial line—have fallen victims to the whim of one man of ambition, to the decision of a fatal minute—and is it supposed that a stroke of the pen, a draft drawn on the future promising greater popular freedom and a better guarantee of peace (a draft, however, which has already been due for generations, but of which the payment is as uncertain to-day as ever)—is it supposed that the promise of a Prince, in whose house breach of faith has become traditional, can be sufficient to expiate or wipe out the memory of such a gigantic crime?

Treasure to the extent of many hundred thousand million marks, painfully acquired by our own and by foreign peoples, has been destroyed, burned and demolished under the scorching storms of three years of war—and a stroke of the pen, which once again promises the Prussian people what had already been promised to it a hundred years ago by the great-grandfather of the present King, is supposed to suffice as expiation and compensation for all the lost wealth which many generations of labouring men will not again be able to create "in the sweat of their face."

The work of civilisation of the whole of civilised humanity, the fruit of the labour of thought, the nobility of outlook of the most enlightened minds of our planet throughout five hundred years have been swept away in the ocean of human blood and tears—and is a stroke of the pen to suffice to save



from the shipwreck this most precious, because imponderable, ideal possession, and to cast a veil of oblivion over the work of destruction ?

Above all, the *morale* of our own people has been poisoned to its innermost marrow, poisoned by the conventional lie of the war of defence, which for three years has now been announced from the throne and deliberately repeated by all the supports of the Throne, and is still unconsciously believed by the unfortunate people. Among the thousands of men who by word and writing, by counsel and action, direct and influence the destiny of the German people, there is—I say it with the utmost definiteness—not a single one who does not know the truth, there is not one who did not know that this war is a carefully considered war of aggression, not one who honestly believed in a war of defence.

And yet :

“Germany seized arms in defence of her freedom and independence and for the inviolability of her territorial possessions.”

So we still find it stated in the most recent announcement of the parties belonging to the majority in the Reichstag—those parties who have for three years more or less thought of conquest and who now at last, hearing the voice of necessity, and not in obedience to their own impulses, have written on their banner the peace of “understanding,” though they are still far from making it the governing principle of their action.

This lie of the war of defence, adhered to for years, and the moral decay of the leading circles of Germany which has ensued in consequence is perhaps the gravest blow which the Hohenzollern dynasty could inflict on their own people. It is a moral defeat, a hundred times more serious than any military defeat could have been. It has led to a famine a hundred times more pernicious for the German people than the famine of bread and of meat, for it is the famine of truth.

A disaster may befall a nation by the instrumentality of others ; it is only by itself that it can be degraded. The enemy can inflict damage, but can bring no shame. Nations



like individuals are never dishonoured, unless when they dishonour themselves.

The primary falsehood of August 4th, 1914, has continued to give birth to new lies, and was bound to do so. The centre of corruption could not but go on festering until it had finally infected and poisoned the soul and the body of the German people beyond hope of recovery. Politics, administration and the judicature have fallen under the influence of the plague. The quaking anxiety that the truth might force its way to the light, that the lie might be unmasked, could not but result in the forcible suppression of any impulse to the truth, whether in word or in writing. Indeed, the judicature was bound to be debased to the position of the handmaid of the dominant lie, to become the spider's-web through which the great gallows-birds could break, but in which the insignificant innocent flies remain entangled. How can a judge with a good conscience speak right in the name of the King, when the King himself speaks, not that which is right, but unright ?

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Jean Paul, if I am not mistaken, observed on one occasion that, in the case of nations also, the gardener's rule held good, that trees, if they refuse to flower, can be made to blossom by "vigorous lesions." Now the German people has certainly been sufficiently subjected to "vigorous lesions"; it has been sufficiently bled, whole oceans of blood have been tapped. And yet ! Even now it refuses to flower. Even yet it has not got so far as the formation of new sap which is the first presupposition of a new period of flowering. That is because external treatment, the therapeutics of the body, has not yet been followed by internal treatment, the therapeutics of the soul, because that more trying and more important subsequent cure of the reconvalescent is still wanting, without which no bodily letting of blood can have value or result. This inner therapeutics, however, is :

The free confession of guilt, the extirpation of the great lie, the exaltation of truth to the throne which is her due, even if other thrones should thereby be downcast.



Here no drugs or poultices are of any avail. Here a radical remedy is required, the uncleanness must be burned out and excised, the X-rays of truth must penetrate into all the hollow places of the soul of the nation, so that the duped people may no longer be deceived. The weal of the German people depends on this remedial process.

"The dead can be buried, but not the truth." It is truth alone, the naked unadorned truth, that can extricate the German people from the moral morass into which falsehood has plunged it.

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As contrasted with this great and decisive question of the truth, all the small questions of the so-called "inner regeneration" and of the "democratic development of Germany"—or by whatever name those fine things may be called—possess a subordinate importance merely; their relative importance is as one to a hundred thousand. Certainly, the concession of equal suffrage in Prussia—if it becomes a reality, and does not merely remain a promise—may be full of significance as the first step on the path to the democratisation of Prussia and Germany. But it is full of significance only in the sense that it furnishes the presupposition and ground on which the great, the all-important, question of guilt can be investigated and decided.

Who bears the responsibility for the European war? That is and must be the question of all questions in the German Empire. It is only from this point that a new Archimedes can move the German world on its hinges. It is merely as a means to an end, and not as an end in itself, that the democratisation of Prussian Germany would be of value, merely as a means to the establishment of the guilt of the reigning Hohenzollern House, the guilt of the father, of the son and of their unholy spirit, the guilt of this baneful trinity in the greatest catastrophe in the history of mankind. If democracy in Germany leads to this end, and if after attaining the end it draws the necessary consequences, then we should hail with joy the dawn of better days which is to-day announced in the faint and heavily clouded twilight of morning. If, however, this result does not supervene, should there be a failure to draw the neces-



sary consequences, then the signs of the new time will be deceptive, the conditions in Germany, and consequently in the world, will in essential matters remain as before.

The German Reichstag itself is based on an equal franchise—the franchise which is to-day promised to the Prussian people—and yet the representatives of the German people did not possess the power, and did not even make an effort, to oppose the wilfully criminal provocation of this world-war on the part of the Hohenzollern dynasty, or even to withhold their subsequent approval. Will a Prussian Landtag, under the curb of the Prussian Upper House, possess more power, or a greater determination to exercise its power against the Prussian King than the German Reichstag possessed against the German Emperor? Will a Prussian representative body be in a position to hold a tighter rein on the Hohenzollern ambition and itch for power than a German representative body was able to do? Who would give way to such a dangerous delusion?

From this it follows that democracy *as such* is of no value to Germany and to the world. It only acquires value as a means to unmask Hohenzollern criminality, to shake off the Hohenzollern Empire.

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A ruler who is unable to rule himself has forfeited the right to rule others. The slave of his own passions, his own ambitions, his own vanity and greed of power cannot be the lord and master of the passions of others. The hereditary monarchy—in itself an evil and an absurdity, inasmuch as it makes the condition of millions dependent on the accidental qualities of an individual, on his virtues or vices, or his prudence or stupidity, on his love or distaste of work—becomes intolerable, the ruin, the shame of a people, when the prince ceases to be the first servant of the State, when he degrades the State and the citizens to be the instruments of his personal whims and desires.

No one has expressed this better and more clearly than the Crown Prince Frederick, afterwards the great Prussian King, in his *Observations on the Political Condition of Europe* (1738):

The mistake of most princes lies in this, that they believe that God has, out of special consideration for them and expressly for their



greatness, their happiness and pride, created the thronging nations, whose welfare is entrusted to them, and that their subjects are merely the tools and the servants of their unbridled passions. . . . If princes were to lay aside these erroneous ideas and were to go back to the origin of their office, they would see that their dignity, of which they are so jealous, that their elevation is merely the work of the people, that the countless thousands who are entrusted to them did not slavishly submit to an individual, in order to make him more powerful and awe-inspiring, that they did not abase themselves before one of their fellow-citizens to be the martyrs of his whims and the plaything of his crotchets. . . .

They would learn that the true glory of rulers does not lie in the oppression of their neighbours, or in the increase of their slaves, but in the fulfilment of the duties of their office, and in the performance of the wishes of those who have endowed them with the highest power and to whom they owe their might as rulers. . . .

It is a shame and a disgrace to ruin one's States, and it is an injustice and a criminal lust of plunder to conquer something to which one has no legal claim.

These apt words of their great ancestor Frederick II have been forgotten by the present generation of Hohenzollerns. They do not feel that they are the servants, but the lords and masters of their people. The criminal lust of plunder, which the philosopher of Sans Souci (as he called himself)—a philosopher among Kings, but also a king among philosophers—this criminal lust of plunder which the greatest of the Hohenzollerns branded as a “shame and a disgrace” to any princely race, has become the sign manual and the maxim of his degenerate descendants. The national Prussian Kingdom, the German Empire, that “perpetual union for the protection of the territory of the league,” as it is called in the Imperial Constitution, have been transformed by them into the instruments of a Cæsarian megalomania and of plans of conquest to rule the world. The ground from which they have sprung and climbed to unimagined greatness they have themselves undermined and robbed of its fertility. They have expanded the justified desire of Prussian Germany to be a great Power, which was satisfied long ago, into an unjustified and insatiable “itch for world-power” with which the great bulk of the people refuses to have anything to do.

The German people wants to be free and united, but it has no desire to be a ruling and a conquering nation. The stamp which the Imperial Hohenzollerns have imprinted



upon it is false coin, which had no currency in German countries before the Hohenzollern Empire, and will again cease to have currency after that has passed away. To liberate themselves from such dangerous counterfeiters, that is the great, the holy task of the German people—that is at the same time its right and its duty—its higher divine right which stands above the detailed human rights.

When the oppressed seeks all in vain for justice,  
And when his burden grows insufferable,  
With tranquil mind he lifts his eyes to Heaven  
And calls from thence his everlasting rights,  
Which are recorded there inalienable  
And, like the stars themselves, inviolate.<sup>1</sup>

So long as the House of Hohenzollern—with its heavily-laden past, with its plans portending disaster for the future—guides the destiny of the German people,

so long as the danger exists that the evil father may be followed by the still more evil son—the seduced by the seducer—that son whose head is anointed with no drop of democratic oil,<sup>2</sup> whose foot, however, before it has mounted the steps of the throne has waded through unending streams of human blood,

so long as this greatest misfortune can still befall the German people,

so long will things be no better in German countries.

This danger, however, will exist so long as the crowned contrivers of this war are still able to represent themselves as the innocent victims of the wiles of the adversary, so long as triumphal arches are built for them, instead of their being immured in prison or restrained in a strait-waist-

<sup>1</sup> [Wenn der Gedrückte nirgends Recht kann finden,  
Wenn unerträglich wird die Last—greift er  
Hinauf getrost den Mutes in den Himmel  
Und holt herunter seine ew'gen Rechte,  
Die droben hangen unveräusserlich  
Und unzerbrechlich, wie die Sterne selbst.]

<sup>2</sup> The reader will recall the fact that Uhland's celebrated saying ("Believe me, Gentlemen, no head will shine upon Germany, unless it is anointed with a full drop of democratic oil") was coined in a speech delivered by the poet in the Frankfurt Parliament on January 22nd, 1849, against the hereditary nature of the Imperial dignity.



coat, so long as the crowd hails them in jubilation instead of cursing and damning them. It is not wreaths of laurels that are their due, but crowns of thorns. It is to the place of execution on Golgotha that they should be compelled to trail the cross of their misdeed—these most Christian rulers, who have degraded the Bearer of the Cross, the Preacher of Love and of Mercy to be the protector and the accomplice of their anti-Christianity.

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Only one thing is necessary in order that the punishment should follow the crime, and that is the recognition of the fact, the recognition of the truth regarding the origin of this war. This truth, once recognised, will not merely enlighten the heads of the Germans, it will also strengthen their arms for the execution of that which is needful for the restoration of the health of the German people.

Abraham Lincoln once said that a Government can fool some people all the time, that it can fool all the people for some time, but that it cannot fool all the people all the time.

How long will the German Government continue to fool the German citizens? The more speedily democracy progresses in Germany, the more quickly will this fooling reach its end. It is in this sense, as a means towards an end, as the first rung on the ladder leading to the liberation of Germany from the domination of the Hohenzollerns, that an advance towards democracy in Prussia and Germany would be most cordially welcomed.

But the reason which makes progress in this direction appear to us a step to be hailed is completely opposed to that which has moved the Prussian King to give utterance to his promises which are still unfulfilled. For us democracy is the key to the full and wide opening of our prison, for him it is a safety-valve to prevent the explosion of the overheated German "witches' kettle." For us it is a beginning, for him it is a conclusion. To the people who are hungering for truth and freedom he tosses a few crumbs of democratic "freedom," in order in this way to make the hunger for truth forgotten. He seeks to avoid the storming of the Bastille by opening to the storming parties a small back-door in the stronghold. He seeks to avoid the threatening collision by skilfully switching the lines, and thus diverting on to a



side track the locomotive which is rushing ahead at full steam. He pushes into the background the main subject which the German people is called upon to discuss with its Imperial House, and puts forward for discussion a subsidiary question which, while no doubt important, is not decisive.

This may reveal an ingenious and cunning device on the part of the Prince and his counsellors, but it will in no way advantage them. The collision will still take place, the Bastille will still be stormed, the main subject will still come up for discussion. The question of the "To be" or "Not to be" of the Hohenzollerns—and that is the question of guilt—will yet be put forward; it will yet become the question of all questions in Germany.

Germany will be, *without* the Hohenzollerns; or else it will not be.

The cup of the sins of this princely race is full, full to overflowing.

Other States, other royal families, indeed *all* States and all royal families in history, have had their periods of rise, of greatness and decay. The Oriental States before the Christian era, the city States of ancient Greece, the Roman Kings, the Roman Republic, the Roman Emperors, the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, the Spanish world-empire, the Bourbons, the Napoleons, all these, in their time the most powerful States and the most powerful royal families, in part ruling the world as it was then known, have flourished, withered and finally decayed.

Is the race of the Hohenzollerns to live for ever?

With the great Elector in the seventeenth century it began its ascent. With William I, the new creator of the German Empire, it reached its culminating point. With William II, the author of this world catastrophe, it will itself experience its catastrophe.

\* \* \* \* \*

After two years of this insensate murder, the Emperor William said: "I do not envy the man who has on his conscience the responsibility for this war."

And indeed this man is not to be envied. No matter how tranquil may be his outward appearance, careless and



untroubled as may be his demeanour before his generals and parasites, nevertheless unless he bears a stone in place of a heart, unless he carries in his bosom a lifeless lump of ice in place of a living conscience, fearful struggles must take place within, every day and every hour, waking and asleep. His days must be embittered, his nights must be rendered horrible by appalling nightmares. An interminable multitude of women and children, clothed in black, wailing and wringing their hands, must pass before his terrified eyes—a funeral procession longer than the endless trenches which stretch from the North Sea to the Black Sea—thousands of miles in length. And always there are new women and new children—without interruption, without cessation.

And behind these—behind the mothers and the brides, behind the widows and the orphans—there is an equally long and even more melancholy procession of lads and of men, lads of 17 alongside men of 50, striplings whose chins are scarcely downy beside mature, bearded men who have almost turned grey. And all, all of them are mutilated and blinded, with maimed faces and bruised bodies—the blind led by the lame, the lame again made capable of some sort of motion with the help of crutches and artificial limbs—all scantily patched together with false eyes, noses and jaws and with all possible artificial devices, in order at least to counterfeit the semblance of life, which is for most but a half death.

And behind these, behind the blind and the lame and the maimed, there are those whose fate is even worse, the insane whose terrible experiences have robbed them of their reason, the most precious gift that divine providence bestows on man. These wretched beings have illustrated the truth of the saying of the poet : “He who does not lose his understanding over certain things has none to lose.”

And this procession of lamentation and of agony continues to pass—and there is no end, no end ! . . .

No, indeed, the man who has all this on his conscience is not to be envied. Better to labour for a pittance as a miner in the bowels of the earth, better to earn a scanty living as a day labourer in the burning heat of the sun,



better be a stone-breaker at the side of the road and in soul-killing labour break flints, day out day in, than be a prince burdened with such a tormenting conscience ; better these than bear the proud crowns of Kings and Emperors, than dwell in ostentatious palaces and force one's will on a subject people of seventy million souls.

Yes, indeed, if this mighty ruler of the people still believed in what he wants to make the people believe, if he still regarded as living truth the bugbear of the threatened Fatherland which for three years he has now held before him as a protective talisman, as a conjurer of spirits—then he might indeed be a subject of pity as the protagonist of the most fearful tragedy of mankind, but he would not have to be condemned as its author and inspirer.

As it is, however, he knows better than anyone in the world that all that he has been saying and writing for three years regarding the origin of this war and the responsibility for it is but lies and deception, idle invention and hypocrisy, that in word and in deed with small variations he resembles the ballad-king :

For all his thoughts are horror, there's lies in all he says ;  
And all his deeds are scourgings, and all he writes betrays.<sup>1</sup>

He knows that he is the originator of all the nameless misery which passes before him in an endless chain, and he knows, moreover, that all these unfortunate people have so far not yet recognised him as its originator. To the dismay occasioned by his deed there has been added the fear of its discovery—that tormenting, scourging fear which the Greeks embodied in their snaky-headed goddesses of vengeance—that fear which makes the nights sleepless and awaits the dawning red with the feeling of anguish : “ The sun will bring the thing to light.”

No, indeed, this man is not to be envied.

Those of us, however, who know his guilt as well as he knows it, have no occasion to rest satisfied with the punishment which his tormented conscience inflicts upon him. We have no occasion to delete from his book of guilt the deed that was committed, just because when he begins

<sup>1</sup> [Denn was er sinnt, ist Schrecken, und was er spricht ist Lug,  
Und was er tut, ist Geissel, und was er schreibt ist Trug.]



to entertain doubts regarding the complete success of his plans, he would now be glad to withdraw from the bankrupt undertaking with half or with a quarter of his gains, just because, fearing the discovery of his misdeed in his own land, he would now be glad to pay the gigantic score with the copper coins of a few "promised" liberties to the people.

No, we shall not allow the prince who perpetrated such an action to escape at such a cheap rate. He who has elosed millions of young and beaming blue eyes is not himself to escape "with blue eyes." He has sacrificed his abettor, the Chancellor. That, however, is not to save the person whose guilt is greatest from punishment and retribution. "The mantle now has fallen, the duke must follow too."

\* \* \* \* \*

A hundred years ago, when Germany had arisen in her strength from the deepest degradation and had shaken off the yoke of foreign domination, when the people with their blood had freed the soil of the Fatherland from the invader and had again re-established the German princes in their "inherited" rights, it was shown that the Germans possessed the strength to defeat the enemies without, but not the enemy within. External freedom was achieved, bondage within the country remained.

In this hour of need it was Ludwig Uhland, the great German national poet, who on the third anniversary of the battle of Leipzig addressed to his unmanly countrymen the manly words of warning :

The foreign hordes you have defeated ;  
And yet within there dawns no light.  
You have not yet attained your freedom  
Because you have not stablished Right.<sup>1</sup>

Then it was a struggle for liberation which the Germans had to wage against the foreign invader. To-day the parts are reversed. To-day—unfortunately—the nations of Europe are obliged to wage the war of liberation against the German people misguided by criminal potentates.

As a sacrifice to the Hohenzollern greed of power and

<sup>1</sup> [Zermalnt habt ihr die fremden Horden,  
Doch innen hat sich nichts gehellt.  
Und freie seid ihr nicht geworden  
Weil ihr das Recht nicht festgestellt.]



booty millions of German sons, brothers and fathers have had to drench with their blood the fields of Russia.

As a sacrifice to the Hohenzollern greed of power and booty Germany's sources of nourishment and her wealth have been drained from the hungry people to the extent of milliards of marks and thrust into the jaws of the ravenous moloch of war.

As a sacrifice to the Hohenzollern greed of power and booty Germany's honour and respect throughout the world have been buried for generations to come, and perhaps for ever.

After this immeasurable disaster occasioned by the most criminal megalomania, will a new Uhland dare to address to the German people the reproachful warning: "You have not yet attained your freedom"?

Is that nation which was able to oppose a world of external enemies, once again to abase itself before the internal enemy and to kiss in Christian humility the hand which struck it?

No, that shall not and must not be.

Freedom, which is everywhere scoffing at its chains, which has even burst with a daring wrench the doors of the Tsarish dungeon, will also force her way into German countries. As blood and iron forged German unity, so also will blood and iron forge German freedom, the freedom whose iron figure can be erected only on the ruin of the House of Hohenzollern.

A familiar proverb says that "when princes weep the nations bleed, but their eyes are more easily dried than our wounds."

The time should have come to be no longer content with the crocodile tears of princes, but to teach them what bleeding means. Even if the authors of all these tears and wounds were to-day to renounce all the fruits of their misdeed—even if they were willing to bestow on their peoples true freedom and to grant to the world a true and enduring peace—all these concessions would represent no more than a small part-payment of their guilt, not an extinction of the debt. All the guarantees of a better future could not extinguish the baseness of an evil past.



The autocrat who painfully and fragmentarily allows a few liberties to be wrenched from him under the pressure of a threatened rising of the people, merely confirms thereby that he has so far kept his people in bondage. The robber who was unable to thrust his booty in his pocket does not cease to be a robber. The murderer remains a murderer, if he takes upon himself a solemn vow to refrain from murder in future.

It is only with the conclusion of peace without that there will begin our war within. It is only when arms are laid down as against the outer enemy, that we shall begin to arm against the internal enemy. Not until the debit account is closed will we—we Germans—present the account to our debtors.

Then, indeed, they will be called upon to pay—to pay, not with concessions and petty grants, not with the cheap coin of repentance and self-confession, not with trivial improvements here and trivial embellishments there. No, but to pay in their own person, *payer de sa personne*—to be punished and make atonement in their bodies and in their life, in wealth and in blood, in their children and children's children.

“Where there is no punishment, there are no guilty.”

May the blood of the murdered be upon the heads of their murderers! An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!

Such is the requirement of earthly, such the requirement of heavenly justice.

\* \* \* \* \*

Where, however, are the wise in Germany who recognise this? Where are the strong who will carry it through?

“When will the saviour come into this country?”

When will the man of action appear, who will free this brave and sturdy people from a dynasty which has survived its day, which has forfeited its princely rights, and indeed its life, by its inextinguishable crime?

Ended in the thirty-eighth month of the war.  
End of September, 1917.

THE END.



## TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

“OF Prince Lichnowsky in London—the only one among our Ambassadors—we must say this in his honour, that he earnestly desired peace, and that he was only the innocent victim of those above him.” Such was the judgment formed in the beginning of 1915 by the author of *J'accuse* regarding the part played by the German Ambassador in London in the events leading to the outbreak of war. In the first volume of *The Crime* (pages 199, 200) there is a passage bearing on the same point which it may not be without interest to recall: “Although I possess no authentic information on the point, I am convinced merely on the study of the documentary evidence that if Prince Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador, could be asked on oath whether Sir Edward Grey had from the beginning to the end of the conflict sincerely desired and striven for peace, he would emphatically answer the question in the affirmative.”

Since *The Crime* was completed Prince Lichnowsky's answer to this question has been given to the world sooner than could have been expected, and indeed sooner than the late Ambassador in London himself intended. His memorandum, now published under the title *My Mission to London, 1912-14*,<sup>1</sup> was written in August, 1916, and distributed in confidence to a few friends of the author. Owing to the accident that one copy passed beyond the circle for whom the memorandum was originally intended, a Swedish paper was in a position to publish extracts in March of this year; since then the whole memorandum

<sup>1</sup> Cassell & Co.



has been given to the public and has become widely known as one of the most important documents bearing on the origin of the war. In view of the fact that the author of *The Crime* was precluded from referring to any events after September, 1917, it appears desirable to consider very briefly the bearing of Lichnowsky's revelations on the conclusions arrived at in the present work.

Not the least important feature of Lichnowsky's memorandum is to be found in the fact that it is not primarily or essentially designed to furnish an account of the immediate antecedents of the war in so far as they were within the knowledge of the author. The immediate object is to show the folly of Germany in adhering to what Lichnowsky calls the "insane Triple Alliance policy," which he elsewhere describes as "a return to the days of the Holy Roman Empire and the mistakes of the Hohenstaufens and Habsburgs." Lichnowsky's purpose in writing is to show that Germany has not been pursuing her own true interests in subordinating her policy to that of Austria, and it is merely as an illustration of this general thesis that he discusses the events of 1914.

With regard to the events immediately leading to the war, Lichnowsky's evidence contains little that was not previously known or at least inferred; it is nevertheless of the highest importance that a witness so favourably placed for forming an authoritative judgment should arise in so unexpected a quarter to add his testimony to the efforts made by the Entente countries to preserve peace during the critical days. Lichnowsky, as he himself tells us, and as indeed is obvious on the published documents, was kept by the authorities in Berlin in ignorance on many matters on which he had a right to be informed. Suspected of "Austrophobia," he was not instructed regarding events in Vienna and the views there entertained, and consequently on learning of the assassination of the Archduke he attached no great political importance to the occurrence. Indeed, on arriving in Berlin at the end of June he impressed on an incredulous Chancellor the satisfactory nature of Germany's foreign relations, emphasising a truth, familiar to Bernhardi, that Russia had no interest in attacking Germany, and that both England and France wanted



peace. It was while passing through Berlin on his return to London that Lichnowsky appears to have received the first intimation of the approaching catastrophe, although even then he underestimated the importance of the intimation that Austria intended "to put an end to an impossible situation." According to Lichnowsky, the decisive conference was held at Potsdam on July 5th, when Austria's action was sanctioned, and the possibility that war with Russia might result was regarded as a contingency which would do "no harm."

On his return to London, Lichnowsky soon experienced the acute embarrassment involved in being the official representative of a policy of which he personally disapproved. He received instructions to induce the Press in this country to adopt a friendly attitude "should Austria administer the *coup de grâce* to the Great Serbian movement, and to use his influence to prevent public opinion becoming hostile to Austria." The possibility of achieving success on these lines appeared so remote that Prince Lichnowsky felt impelled to utter an urgent warning, not only on the immediate subject of his instructions, but against the whole plan, which he described as "adventurous and dangerous."

The answer received from Herr von Jagow furnishes ample confirmation of the analysis given in *J'accuse* and *The Crime* of the German attitude towards the possible consequences of the Austrian Ultimatum. Russia, it was said, was not ready; the more firmly Germany took sides with Austria, the more would Russia give way. Austria was already accusing Germany of weakness, and therefore Germany dared not leave her in the lurch. On the other hand, public opinion in Russia was becoming more and more anti-German, "so we must just risk it."

Confronted with the revealed recklessness of official German policy, Prince Lichnowsky now saw the only possible hope of salvation in British mediation, knowing how great was Sir E. Grey's influence in Petrograd, and that this influence would be used there to promote a peaceful solution. He therefore turned to the British Minister and requested him in confidence to counsel moderation in Russia.



Prince Lichnowsky strongly supports the view that the Serbian reply, the moderation of which he attributes to the British efforts, was such that it should have been an easy matter to arrive at a solution of the existing difficulties. In words which are almost identical with those of the author of *The Crime* he says: "It would have been an easy matter for us to find an acceptable formula for the points at issue. . . . Given good will everything could have been settled at one or two sittings." Lichnowsky therefore strongly supported Grey's Conference-proposal, but without success. He was told that he had to work for "the localisation of the conflict." It is almost unnecessary to dwell on a point frequently emphasised in the course of this work, namely, that Germany's desire at this stage for a "localisation" of the conflict implies that she had already determined on a Continental war, and was at the most anxious not to add Britain to the number of her enemies.

Prince Lichnowsky's views on the later stages of the crisis do not differ from those elaborated in the first volume of *The Crime*. He mentions Sir E. Grey's request to Germany to submit an alternative proposal, but on this his only comment is that "we insisted on war." He justifies the growing impression that Germany wanted war under any circumstances, since her attitude on a question which did not directly concern her was not capable of any other interpretation. He summarises the many efforts made to avert catastrophe, all unavailing: "Berlin persisted; Serbia must be massacred."

It is not without interest to compare the points in the indictment against Germany as summarised on pages 240-242 of *J'accuse* with Lichnowsky's brief summary on the question of responsibility:

"1. We encouraged Count Berchtold to attack Serbia, although German interests were not involved and the danger of a world-war must have been known to us. Whether we were aware of the wording of the Ultimatum is completely immaterial.

"2. During the time between the 23rd and 30th July, 1914, when M. Sazonof emphatically declared that he would not tolerate any attack on Serbia, we rejected the British proposals of mediation, although Serbia, under Russian and British



pressure, had accepted almost the whole of the Ultimatum, and although an agreement about the two points at issue could easily have been reached, and Count Berchtold was even prepared to content himself with the Serbian reply.

"3. On the 30th July, when Count Berchtold wanted to come to terms, we sent an Ultimatum to Petrograd merely because of the Russian mobilisation, although Austria had not been attacked; and on the 31st July we declared war on Russia, although the Tsar pledged his word that he would not order a man to march as long as negotiations were proceeding—thus deliberately destroying the possibility of a peaceful settlement."

Apart from the question of the direct provocation of the war, Prince Lichnowsky's memorandum also furnishes valuable confirmation of the main theses of the second volume of *The Crime*, which deals with the more remote antecedents of the war. The most striking feature in Lichnowsky's account of his mission to London is his unstinted testimony to the sincerity and integrity of British foreign policy, and above all of its chief representative, during recent years. Of the foreign policy of Germany, on the other hand, he speaks in almost the same terms as the author of *The Crime*, and the explanation which he gives of the origin and the purpose of the Entente coincides entirely with that already advanced in these pages. Germany's Moroccan policy had repeatedly shaken confidence in her pacific intentions and had given rise to the suspicion that her object was "to keep Europe on the *qui vive*—and when opportunity offered to humiliate France." So also, in Lichnowsky's view, it was Germany's attitude that promoted the Russo-Japanese and later the Anglo-Japanese *rapprochement*. "In face of 'the German peril' all other differences faded into the background." In another place he speaks of Germany's policy having led to "an association—the Entente—which represented a mutual insurance against the risk of war."

On the general question of Anglo-German relations in recent years, the words used by Lichnowsky imply that the failure of Lord Haldane's mission is to be attributed to the unreasonableness of the attitude assumed by the German Government, "as we had required the assurance of neutrality, instead of being content with a treaty securing us against British attacks and attacks with British support."



Despite this failure, Prince Lichnowsky testifies to Sir E. Grey's assiduity in endeavouring to arrive at an agreement with Germany. Having eliminated Anglo-French and Anglo-Russian differences, it was now his object to overcome those existing between Britain and Germany, and by means of a friendly understanding with Germany to bring closer together the two groups into which Europe was then divided. The final effort in this direction is represented by Sir E. Grey's celebrated despatch of July 31st, 1914 (No. 101 in the Blue Book), to which the author of *The Crime* attaches throughout so much importance.

The various references in *The Crime* to the Conference of Ambassadors held in 1912 in connection with discussions arising out of the Balkan War are supplemented in an interesting manner in the memorandum of Prince Lichnowsky, whose evidence as a participant in the Conference is of special value. Sir E. Grey, he tells us, by no means took sides with the Entente. Germany, on the other hand, invariably took up the attitude prescribed by Vienna. Thus while Germany in all questions supported Austria and Italy, the British Minister "mostly supported our group in order not to give a pretext like the one a dead Archduke was to furnish later on." As is repeatedly emphasised by the author of *The Crime*, the consideration which Germany received at the Conference of 1912 deprived her of any pretext for refusing a similar Conference in 1914.

It is only necessary to refer to two other points on which the memorandum of Prince Lichnowsky serves to confirm the conclusions of the author of *The Crime*. The first is with regard to the "commercial jealousy" which plays so large a part in German literature of recent years. It was pre-eminently in commercial circles that the German Ambassador encountered the most friendly spirit and the endeavour to further common economic interests. As he expressly states: "The increasing commerce with Germany . . . had given rise to the wish to maintain friendly relations with their best customer and business friend."

The other point on which the evidence of Prince Lichnowsky is of value in connection with the conclusions advanced in *The Crime* is in connection with Britain's



attitude towards the question of German colonial expansion. On this question, of course, Lichnowsky is able to speak with the highest authority as the person principally concerned in the negotiations regarding the Colonial and the Baghdad Railway treaties. In connection with both these matters Lichnowsky bears generous testimony to the fact that the British Government showed the "greatest consideration" for Germany's interests and wishes. The common German complaint that Britain was an immovable obstacle in the way of Germany's colonial ambitions—already refuted in these pages—is still more completely demolished by the evidence of the German representative who is most qualified to speak on the subject.

\*            \*            \*            \*            \*

In one respect there has been a fundamental alteration in the situation which it is necessary to bear in mind in reading the third volume of *The Crime*. Since the section of the present work dealing with War-Aims was completed, Germany and Austria have secured peace on their eastern frontiers. The course of the negotiations of Brest-Litovsk and the later peace with Rumania now furnish the most lucid commentary on what is involved in Germany's war-aims, and at the same time a warning example as to the meaning of a "peace of understanding" as interpreted in Germany. Speaking on November 29th, 1917, Count Hertling, in intimating the proposed initiation of negotiations, spoke as follows :

There is nothing we more desire than to return to the old neighbourly relations, especially in the economic sphere. So far as concerns Poland, Lithuania and Courland, we will respect the right of self-determination of their peoples.

The events which have taken place in the East since these words were spoken are a testimony to the degree of confidence to be placed in the protestations of Germany's rulers.

In the third volume of *The Crime* the nature of Germany's war-aims is necessarily to a large extent a matter of inference from the speeches of leading statesmen and from administrative action in the occupied territories of Belgium and Poland. Now, however, it is unnecessary to infer that Germany aims at a "peace of violence." The treaties



already concluded are designed to surround Germany with States dependent on the Central Powers, and, as the Poles were prompt to realise, the peace with the Ukraine was drawn in terms calculated to engender and perpetuate friction between Poland and the Ukraine. The proposed peace of understanding ends in a peace based on the principle of *divide et impera*.

The conclusion of these various negotiations proves that the truest exposition of the German attitude to-day is still to be found in the pages of Freytag von Loringhoven rather than in the occasional speeches of German statesmen who assert their moderation in astonishment at the hardness of the world's heart. The extent to which German opinion is still annexationist is illustrated in an interesting manner in a lecture delivered in Berne in January last by Herr Grumbach, and now republished in pamphlet form.<sup>1</sup> While the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk were still being ardently pursued with a view to arriving at a peace of understanding, the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger* invited a number of eminent gentlemen to define for the benefit of its readers what, in their opinion, should be Germany's aims at Brest-Litovsk. Herr Grumbach reproduces certain of these views, which in terseness and freedom from ambiguity might well furnish a model to the German Government. Thus Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, the representative of academic calm, demands

a peace with Russia which leaves us a completely free hand against our other enemies. . . . We will gladly grant Russia conditions which allow it to order its life as it wills, and to recognise us as the good neighbour and friend which we have always been and will be glad to be again. But it must bear the consequences which its former Government has incurred by the war. We are victors and conquerors. . . . Courland and Lithuania must in some form or other come within Germany's sphere of influence.

Pastor Traub is equally explicit, and amongst other reasons advances a curiously Germanic theory in justifying his demand for annexations :

In a separate Russian peace I hope for the absorption of Courland, necessary parts of Esthonia and Livonia, Lithuania

<sup>1</sup> *Brest-Litovsk*, by S. Grumbach. (Payot, Lausanne.)



and Poland in the political sphere of the Central Powers. . . . If we do not demand these, the Russian would be more convinced than he already is that we Germans needed peace from fear of the internal revolution.

Professor Kloss puts the matter in a nutshell :

I can summarise in a word what I look for from Brest-Litovsk : a Hindenburg peace.

Arnold von Siemens, a member of the Prussian Upper House, takes a long view :

So far as concerns the Baltic Provinces and Lithuania, there must be formed a single State which should be associated as closely as possible with the German Empire with a view, perhaps later on, to its possible incorporation as a federated State. The Constitution must be of such a character that the German elements should in the first place have decisive influence.

Prince zu Schönaich-Carolath manifests an unexpected degree of tactfulness :

Without shouting *Vae victis* at our opponent in the East, we shall nevertheless not forget that, thanks to our armies, we are the victors.

One more of these quotations may suffice. The President of the " Evangelical Workers' Union " writes :

The German Imperial Government must under no circumstances abandon its attitude in relation to the association of Courland, Livonia and parts of Esthonia to the German Empire, and it must under no circumstances concur in the complete surrender of Belgium.

In the matter of war-aims the dominant tendency in Germany, as reflected in the actions of the Government and in the opinions of all who can lay claim to influence, is still as annexationist as when the third volume of *The Crime* was completed. In his speech in the Reichstag on June 24th, 1918, Herr von Kühlmann, betraying a deeper insight into the human heart than is ordinarily vouchsafed to German statesmen, postulated as a necessary prior condition of an exchange of views " a certain degree of mutual confidence in each other's probity and chivalry."



The sentiment is admirable, even if it may incline to the platitudinous. But those who in Germany vaunt the modesty and the sweet reasonableness of their war-aims might find it a not wholly unprofitable occupation to examine Germany's war-aims as realised concretely in the peace which has now enshrouded the East, and not merely as expressed in nebulous phraseology on gala days in the Reichstag. The proceedings at Brest-Litovsk and the terms of the peace with Rumania are possessed of a solidity which does not characterise the protestations of Count Hertling or his Foreign Secretary. If the world is distrustful, need Herr von Kühlmann be so greatly surprised? Experience has shown that the German peace of understanding has a natural tendency to end in what, in moments of exhilaration, the German familiarly calls a Hindenburg peace. Such a peace Germany has already obtained over those who were foolish enough to negotiate, or powerless to choose any other course. *Cela nous met en méfiance.*



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